

NINE SELECT
SERMONS

Preached upon special occa-
sions in the Parish Church of
St. Gregories by
St. Pauls.

By the late Reverend
JOHN HEWITT D. D.

Together
With his publick Prayers
before and after SERMON.



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THE BIRDS OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

19. *Leucosia* *leucostoma* (Fabricius) *leucostoma* (Fabricius) *leucostoma* (Fabricius)

1920-21. 1921-22. 1922-23.

1. *Leucosia* *leucosia* (L.) *leucosia* (L.)

V. 6

Section 1: Vocabulary

THE BIRDS OF THE BAHAMAS

THE CLOTHES

THE BOSTONIAN SOCIETY

THE BIRDS OF THE BAHAMAS

52

H

is



T O

The Right Honourable

L A D Y,

T H E

Lady *Mary Hewyt*,Relict of the late Reverend
JOHN HEWYT, D.D.

Madam,

THe principal intent
of our publishing
these ensuing *Sermons*,
is no other then *Edification*:

A 3 and

The Epistle

and for the avoiding all suspicion of being accounted *spurious* and *illegitimate* ; we have assumed the boldnesse to dedicate them to your *Ladiship*, with a *confident* hope of your *Honourable Protection* ; and that whereas heretofore they have been beneficiall to his *Auditory*, they may now prove no lesse successful to the *intelligent Reader* ; it being pity the *Works* of so *Famous* and *Eminent* a *Divine*, should be raked up in the *embers* of *Oblivion* : And though they have no other *Originall* then the *Pen* of a *ready Writer* ; yet such diligent *care* hath been employed in emitting them to

Dedicatory.

to the *World*, that we
doubt not, but you will
conclude, we have endeavou-
red the perpetuating the me-
mory of your *Pious Consort*:
For here lurks no *Snake*
under these *Verdant Herbs*,
nor *Poysonous Serpent* un-
der these *Fragrant Flowers*;
in this inclosed *Garden*
growes no *Root of Schisme*,
no *slip of Error*, no *fruit of*
Disobedience; but within
this pleasant *Grove* are
such variety of refreshing
contentments to be found,
as may delight your *Ladi-
ship* amidst your more
Solitary Cogitations; and yet
these are but parts of that
Image which ere long we
hope to *erect*, and in a

A 4 larger

The Epistle, &c.

larger Volume. We shall crave
leave to (as we doe at
present) subscribe our
selves,

Madam,

Your Ladiships humbly
devoted Servants,

H. E.

T. R.



THE
EPISTLE
TO THE
READER.

Courteous Reader,

IT was not popular applause, nor private interest, that induced us to expose these ensuing Discourses to publick view; but only an ardent desire to draw a Landskip of the reverend Authors abilities, and though but in Transitu, to give a dark representation of that glorious light, which

The Epistle

which continually, with unwearied beams did radiate the Souls of his faithful Auditory. They are but the shadows of a faithful life ; therefore be not displeased to find them fall short of the living Voice : such curious pieces cannot be drawn without the concurrence of sable lines ; so that if thou find them halt, and only with a crooked finger to point at the Authors stile, be not discouraged thereat, nor with a pre-judge opinion deem this naked Babe illegitimate, because destitute of a Patron ; for thou wilt find assuredly, they are the true off-spring of that worthy Parent, and want only the Fathers hand to lead them into, and preserve them from a captious world. Lay aside all partiall interests, and

we

to the Reader.

we are bold to presume, that thou canst not but with unspeakable profit give them perusal: we are sensible of the many calumnies that will be cast upon our persons for this innocent work, having already in part undergone the reproach of some malicious tongues, who have indeavoured to render the Sermons abortive, and ourselves contemptible in the eyes of a deceived multitude; nor are we able to divine what acceptance they will gain at the hands of any. But we question not (ingenious Reader, whoever thou art) but that thou wilt love the picture for the persons sake; and wilt impute whatever defect shall be found therein, to the want of the Authors pen, and not the ignorant or willing mistake of the Perusers thereof;

for

The Epistle

for they are notes taken by the pen of a ready VVriter, the swiftness of whose motion is able to overtake the most voluble tongue: yet thou canst not but know, that sometimes the smallest hair interposing it self will make a breach in the fullest sentence, thereby interrupting the perfect sense; therefore our care hath been extended to the utmost, that no remarkable fault might appear obvious to the most critical Reader; still indeavouring, that those sacred truths which formerly have been beneficial to the intelligent Hearers, when preached by the reverend Author, may now prove advantageous to the eternal welfare of every Soul that shall peruse them;

them ; which is the earnest desire
of,

Reader,

Thy unfeigned Friends

and Servants,

H. E.

T. R.

A

11.2



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whereof

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Dr. Hewit's publique Prayer before Sermon.

*O thou that hearest Prayers, unto
thee shall all flesh come, for our
help standeth in thy name (O
Lord) which hast made heaven
and earth, we beseech thee there-
fore, let the words of my
mouth, and the meditations
of all our hearts, be now, and
evermore acceptable in thy sight,
O Lord our strength and our
Redeemer.*

O Most glorious and most
powerfull Lord God,
whose dwelling is so far above the
highest heavens, that thou hum-

A blest

Dr. Hewit's Prayer

blest thy self but to look upon the things that are in heaven, and that are in earth; thou art omnipotent and omnipresent, dost whatsoever thou wilt, both in heaven in earth, in the sea, and in all deep places; thou art about our beds, and about our paths; thou spyest out all our wayes, understandest all our thoughts long before we thought. O Lord, when we look up unto thee, and consider thee, to be a God of so pure eyes, as that thou canst not behold iniquity without indignation and wrath; and when we look within our selves, and see that world of corruption that lyeth hidden in our breasts, and those innumerable acts of transgressions that have stained both our persons and our lives; we cannot but be confounded and ashamed

before Sermon.

ashamed before thy face, and are not able to open our mouths; for our sins witness against us, and our iniquities are as sore burdens too heavy for us to bear, they cry up to heaven for vengeance against us, and it is of thy infinite patience and longsuffering towards us, that thou hast not long since poured upon us the Vials of thy wrathfull indignation, nor sentenced us to the pit of eternall destruction. Lord, who can tell how oft he offendeth? The sinfullnesse of our natures, the sins of our lives, the sins of our souls, and the sins of our bodies, our secret and whispering sins, our crying and open sins, our idle and wanton sins, our presumptuous and deliberate sins, the sins we have committed to please

Dr. Hewit's Prayer

our selves, and the sins we have committed to please others; the sins we have committed in our own persons, and the sins we have occasioned others to commit; the sins we know, and the sins we know not; the sins that we have so long striven to hide from others knowledge, that we have even now hid them from our own memories; these, O Lord are more in number then the sands upon the Sea shoar, or the Stars of Heaven which cannot be numbered. We have sinned against the light of Nature, and against the light of Grace, against thy Law, and against thy Gospel, against thy Promises, and against thy Threats, against thy Mercies, and against thy Judgements, against all vows, and promises, and resolutions of better obedience,

before Sermon.

ence, against the reproofs of thy word, against the many motions of thy good spirit in our souls, against thy Fatherly admonitions, against thy loving corrections, against the many fearfull examples of thy Judgements, against the infinite obligations of thy favours, and against the checks of our own consciences. These things have we done, and because thou held thy tongue, we have also thought wickedly, that thou art altogether such an one as our selves, or that either thou dost not see, or dost approve, or wilt not severely punish the crimes that we have so long doted on. If thou Lord God, shouldest be extream to mark what is done amisse, Lord, who is able to abide it? but with thee there is mercy, and with thee

Dr. Hewit's Prayer

there is plenteous redemption, and thou desirest not the death of him that dies, but rather that he should turn from sin and be saved; and seeing that without thee it is not possible for us of our selves to be able to please thee; Lord, turn us to thee, and we shall be turned, for thou art the Lord our God; Draw us, and we shall run after thee, draw us by the cords of love, and with the bands of loving kindnesse; work powerfully upon our spirits by thy holy Spirit, work contrition in our hearts, and godly sorrow for all our sins, even a sorrow to repentance, and repentance to salvation never to be repented off. Break these hard and stony hearts of ours by the hammer of thy word, mollifie them by the oyle of thy grace, smite these rocky hearts

before Sermon.

hearts of ours, by the rod of thy most gracious power, that we may shed forth rivers of tears for all the sins we have committed; Lord, make us grieve because we cannot grieve, and to weep because we cannot weep enough. O that thou wouldest humble us more and more under the true sight and sense of all our ungodliness, of all our wickednesse, and of all our unworthynesse. And O thou Father of mercies, have mercy on us, O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us; thou that takest away the sins of the world, take away the world of our sins; they are too heavie (O Lord) for us to bear, thou only art able to bear them, and thou didst bear all our sins upon thine own bedy upon the

Dr. Hewit's Prayer

tree; O thou that wast wounded for our sins, and bruised for our transgressions, we beseech thee, let the chastisement of our peace be upon thee, and do thou by thy stripes heal us. Hide us most gracious Redeemer, hide us from the wrath of God, in the glorious scars of those meritorious wounds which thou didst suffer for us, and by the virtue of them create peace in heaven for us, by reconciling the Father to us; And O thou that wast our Saviour on earth, we beseech thee, be thou our Advocate in heaven; be thou our High-priest, still offering up thy self a Victim to the Father for us, and besprinkle us with thine own most precious bloud, that through that bloud of sprinkling, our persons, our services, and the desires of our souls may be acceptable to the Father. Be thou

our

before Sermon.

our King, set up thy throne in our hearts, dismantle, and disgarison all the strong holds, and fortifications of sin, that sin may no longer have dominion over us, but do thou rule, and over=rule us, enable us to do thy will, write thy Commandments in our hearts, and thy Statutes in our inward parts, put thy fear into our souls, that we may fear thee, and love thee, and diligently live after thy commands ; Be thou our Prophet leading us into all truth. Oh do thou inform us and teach us the way wherein we should go, and do thou guide us by thine eye, be thou the voice behind us, still directing us, this is the way, walk in it, guide us by thy counsels here, and hereafter receive us unto thy glory. And O Holy Spirit the Comforter, do thou help

Dr. Hewit's Prayer

help our infirmities, and with thy unutterable groans, make intercession for us. And thou that workest both to will, and the deed in us of thine own good pleasure, put into our hearts good desires, and let the continuall assistance of thy grace help us to bring the same to good effect, plant in our souls the love of thy name, graffe in our hearts true Religion, nourish us with all goodnesse, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same so long as we have to live; make us to love that which thou commandest, and to desire that which thou hast promised, that among the sundry and manifold changes, and chances of this mortall life our hearts may surely there be fixt, where true joyes are to be found. And thou that sheddest the pretious ointments of

thy

before Sermon.

thy grace upon all thy faithfull people, O do thou open the eyes of our souls that we may see thee who art invisible, that beholding thy glorious (but invisible) presence in all our actions, we may be so awfully affected towards thee, that whether either the Devil shall tempt us, or the world shall allure us, or our own carnal lusts and sinfull affecti-
ons shall incline us to commit any wickednesse; thy Holy Spirit (O Lord) may in all things so direct, rule, and overrule our hearts, and awaken our consciences to aske us, How shall we dare to commit any wickednesse and sin against thee? Gratiouſ God, keep us from finning against thee, though it were to gain the whole world, for it will not profit us to gain the whole world, and lose our own souls;

Dr. Hewit's Prayer

souls; help us rather, we pray thee, to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. Help us to eschew, and decline all the occasions, all the opportunities that have betrayed us unto sin, and to hate the very garments spotted with the flesh. O Lord, with what affliction soever thou shalt punish us, do not punish us with spirituall judgements and desertions, give us not over to our own hearts lusts, to our own vile, lewd, and corrupt affections, give us not over to hardnesse and impenitency of heart, but make us sensible of the least sin; and give us thy grace to think no sin little committed against thee, our God, but that we may be humbled for it, and repent

of

before Sermon.

of it, and reform it in our lives and conversations; and keep us from presumptuous sins, O let not them get the dominion over us, but keep us innocent from the great offence, O Lord our strength, and our Redeemer. And sanctifie unto us all thy methods and proceedings with us, fitting us for all further tribulations and trials; whatsoever thou in thy divine pleasure shalt be pleased to impose upon us, give us patience, and constancy, and resolution, and fortitude to undergoe it, that though we walke through the valley of the shadow of death we may fear no ill, knowing that thou, O Lord, art mercifully with us, and that with thy rod as well as with thy staffe thou wilt support & comfort us, and that nothing shall be able to separate us from thy

Dr. Hewit's Prayer

thy love which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

For whose sake we beseech thee, be thou mercifull, as to us, so to all mankinde, we are all, O Lord the work of thy hands, gratiouse God, if it be thy will make us all the sheep of thy pasture, thou hast made us all of one common mould, Lord, if it be to thy glory, make us all partakers of one common Salvation; but inspire continually thine universall Church, with the Spirit of truth, unity, and concord; and grant that all they that do confesse thy holy name may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love. Thou hast promised, O Lord, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against thy Church, perform we beseech

before Sermon.

beseech thee, thy most gratiouſe promises both to thy whole Church, and to that part of it, which thou hast planted and now afflicted in these ſinfull Lands, and Nations wherein we live.

Arife (O Lord) and have mercy upon our Sion, it is time that thou have mercy upon her, yea the time is come, for thy ſervants think upon her ſtones, and it pities them to ſee her in the duſt. Lord main- tain thine own cause, rescue the light of thy truth, from all thoſe clouds of errors, and heresies which do ſo much obſcure it, and let the light thereof in a free profesſi- on break forth and ſhine again a- mong us, and that continually even as long as the Sun and Moon en- dureth. To this end, blesſe us all, and above us all blesſe all thoſe to

Dr. Hewit's Prayer

to whom thou hast given a right for to govern thy people; Lord, enable them with thy power (as well as thou hast invested them with authority) to govern the people committed to their charge, in peace, wealth, and godliness. And thou in whose hands are the hearts of all men, and turnest them which way soever thou wilt, turne the hearts of the disobedient, that the streams of their obedience may run within its proper channell, and all flow to the ocean of thy glory. And blesse thy Church with Pastors after thine own heart, that they may feed thy people with knowledge and understanding; that they may teach thy way unto the wicked, and convert sinners unto thee, and in all things, and above all things they may seek thy

before Sermon.

thy honor, and glory. And for the continuance of thy Gospel among us, restore in thy good time to their severall places and callings, (and give grace, O heavenly Father, to) all the reverend Fathers of the Church, and other Orthodox Clergy, that they may both by their life and Doctrine, set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments; let thy blessing be upon the labours of all those whom thou hast commissioned to preach thy word as this day to thy people; be with me the meanest and unworthiest of all thy servants; O that thou wouldest work wonderfully in me, for me, and by me, make me a happy instrument of much glory to thy name, and of much

(a) good

Dr. Hewit's Prayer

good to thy Church and people. And to all thy people every where, give hearing ears, understanding hearts, conscientious souls, and obedient lives, especially to this Congregation here present, that with meek hearts, and due reverence they may hear and receive thy holy word, truly serving thee in righteousness and true holiness all the dayes of their lives.

And we beseech thee, of thy goodnessse, O Lord, to comfort and succour all those that in this transitory life, be in trouble, sorrow, need, sicknesse, or any other adversity; these especially that are commended to our devotion, we humbly recommend to thy Fatherly goodnessse, those whom thou

before Sermon.

thou hast visited with thine hand
upon the bed of sicknesse, O Lord
look down from heaven, behold,
visit, and relieve those thy sick
servants, look upon them with
the eyes of thy mercy; give them
comfort and sure confidence in
thee, defend them from the danger
of the enemy, and keep them
in perpetuall peace and safety
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hear us Almighty and most mercifull God, and Saviour, extend thy accustomed goodnesse to those thy servants who are grieved with sicknesses, visit them. O Lord, as thou didst visit Peters wifes mother, and the Captains servant, so visit and restore unto those sick persons their former healths (if it be thy will) or else

Dr. Hewit's Prayer

give them grace so to take thy visitation here upon earth that after this painfull life ended, they may dwell with thee in life everlasting. And for those thy hand-maids that draw near to the time of their travell, thou who art the present help in the needful time of trouble, stand by them, and save them, preserve them in the danger of Childe-bearing; make them joyfull Mothers of gratiouse Children, bring them to thy holy Baptism, bring them up in thy holy and true Religion, till thou finally bring them to thine everlasting kingdom. And accept of the thankfull hearts of those thy servants, whom thou hast delivered from the great pain and perill of childe-birth; grant, we beseech thee most merciful

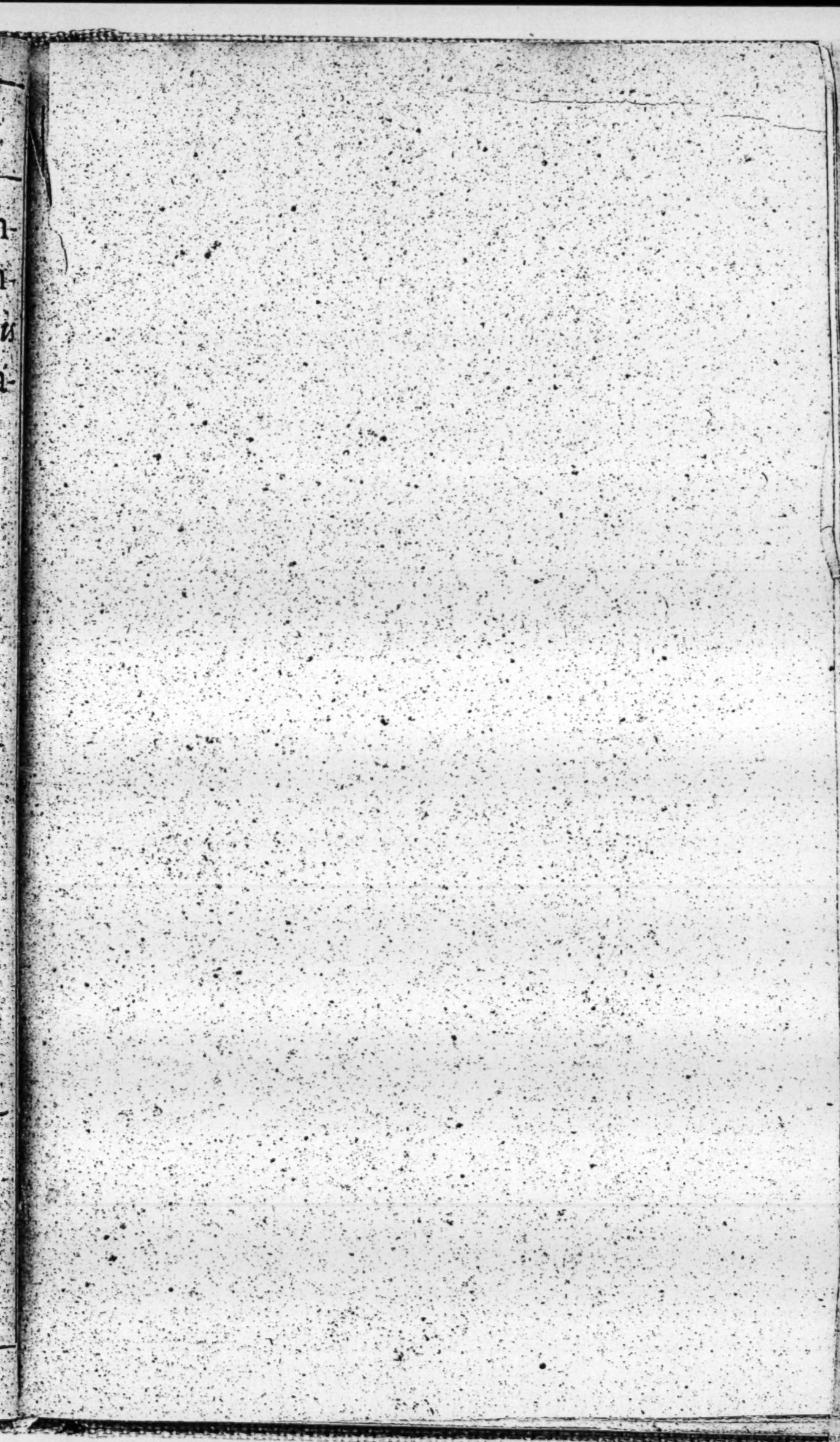
before Sermon.

full Father, that they through thy help may both faithfully live, and walke in their vocations according to thy will in this life present, and also may be partakers of everlasting glory in the life to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And whoever else desire our prayers. (thou knowest all their names, and all their several necessities) whether at Sea or at Land, in this Land, or in others; Lord we humbly recommend them all unto thee, beseeching thee, to visit them with thy salvation, and according to the desire of their souls, as it shall be for thy glory, and their eternal good, Lord grant them their hearts desire, and all for Jesus Christ the righteous sake, in whose blessed name and words,

we

Dr. Hewit's Prayer

we further call on thee, as he himself hath taught and commanded, and encouraged us in his holy Gospell, saying, Our Father, &c.





S E R M. I.

P S A L. 130. v. 3.

*If thou Lord wilt be extreme to
mark what is done amiss, O
Lord, who may abide it?*

I Will sing of Mercy and of Judge-
ment (saith the Kingly Prophet,)
the two everlasting Armes, O Lord,
by which thou upholdest and sup-
portest the beings of mortal Creatures; the
two everlasting wings by which the eternal
majesty of Heaven covers immortal Spirits
with unspeakable goodness, which like the
two Cherubims seated upon the Ark of
Gods glory, cast continually their unspor-
ted eyes upon the rotten raggs of Humane
frailty, aiming still at mans felicity; How
else could dust and ashes expect continued
life from such dry bones as was, and is still,
the foundation of mans body? for should
Heavens propitious eye glance forth no-
thing but renewed smiles upon our actions,
and mercy always fit hovering over our

B Taber-

Mercy and Judgement.

Tabernacles, we should quickly ingulf our spirits in the bottome of miserable security ; or on the contrary, should but the direful hand of Omnipotency it self draw forth his glittering sword against our weak resistance, unto what a paralytick posture would such an appearance strike us, as coming from him whose very breath can speak us into nothing ? Oh then with what bowed knees and humble hearts should every soul of us kiss the very remembrance of a *Jesus*, coming not onely to save them that believe, but to work a present reconcilememt betwixt the Justice and Mercy of God the Father ? that now the one as well as the other, or rather with united consent both together may conspire and joyn issue in the great work of mans redemption : for could your drowsie spirits but lend an ear to the pleasant dialogue that continually passes betwixt these glorious Attributes, now you should hear Justice calls for the Sanctuaries ballance to weigh all the actions of the sons of men, and with a *Mene, Mene, Tekel, &c.* finde such dusty performances, of no validity in Heavens account ; and so poor we, being in *Adam* wilfully lost, are now necessarily fallen short of immortal bliss. Thus is our sentence irrecoverable and no door of hope left for our escape till Mercy, that eternal beam of love, stand forth

forth, and present the all-sufficient merit of a dying Saviour, as full satisfaction for the sins of the whole world ; pleading that faithful covenant made by Justice it self, *that whosoever believes shall not perish, but have everlasting life* : Which faith is the golden pillar that bears up the stately structure of mans everlasting glory : the only hand by which the promises of a better life are made ours ; the sure entail, by which the inheritance purchased in common is become mine , in particular ; it is the only voice by which holy *David* could make an echo that would reach from the lowest deeps to the highest Heavens ; *Out of the deeps have I called unto thee O Lord ; Lord hear my voice* , as you may see, vespse the first of this Psalme : nay, it is the very nerve and sinew of all pious Devotion ; for if you peruse the whole Psalme, you will find it is nothing else but a rehearsal of religious petitions , and serious exhortations. In his petitions you'll find his soul big with holy affiance, spiritual confidence, grounded on Gods word promising, and his own Experience tasting. In his Exhortations, like a faithful Physician he prescribes nothing but what is attested to with his own and others *Probatum est* : making mercy both the beginning and the end , the principal and the final cause of Happiness ; but in both he keeps the eye of humility

Mercy and judgement.

placed upon the raggs of mans unworthiness, as justly demeriting eternal wrath, were God exact in remunerating our actions; for so he closes up the summe of his requests in the words of my Text:

If thou Lord wilt be extreme to marke what is done amiss, O Lord who may abide it?

In which words please to consider two general parts.

1. An antecedent, in these words; *If thou Lord be extreme to marke what is done amiss.*

2. A Consequent, in the other words; who can abide it? Or if you will, look on them.

1. In the *Thesis.*

2. In the *Hypothesis.*

1. In the *Thesis*; wherein you have Gods extremity in punishing.

2. In the *Hypothesis*; There you have mans misery in suffering.

And now my Text in its situation is not unlike a pleasant Grove, presenting to your view variety of pleasant Trees; each bough thereof being richly laden with delicious & goodly fruit, not onely delightful to the eye, but beneficial to the Taste; or if you will, your Conceptions may behold most costly Arras, enriched with the lively story of Gods bounty and mans felicity mutually interwoven in the same

peecce;

peece; but if you list to change the scene, and have the true parts more neerly acted, you may gain a precious enterview of Gods omnipotency displayed in its several Dispensations, and management of Humane affairs, where Justice and Mercy, the twins of royalty, discovering on the one Hand Gods free benevolence in bestowing, and mans utter unworthiness for so large a guerdon; on the reverse parts, your sight is presented with the Almighties just severity in punishing, together with mans reaping misery, the true fruit of his sin. In fine, that I may unbowel this sacred writ, take the substance thereof distilled into these four observations:

1 Its the Corruption of mans nature to do amiss.

2 God is not alwaies *extreme to marke and punish what's done amiss.*

3 God can when he pleases be extreme in *marking and punishing what is done amiss.*

4 If God be extreme in punishing, man must needs be extreme in suffering.

These are the four streams that naturally run their division from this pleasant spring, that voluntarily tenders its silver drops to refresh the heart of every pious Christian; which makes me beg your patience and zealous attention, whilst in order I make these glorious truths to pass before the spiritual eye of your intel-

ligent souls. And first of the
First, namely

Its the corrupt nature of man to do
amiss.

As its the nature of man to be doing, so
its the corruption of that nature to be
doing amiss ; and though God see and ob-
serve all the actions of discomposed and
distempered man, yet its onely the obli-
quity of those actions his severity intends
to reward with punishment : for every
action simply considered in it self is good,
and no way meriting unspeakable torment ;
but every such action contracts eternal
guilt, as performed by and persisted in of
sinful man, whose customary nature and
naturall custome is to do evil ; for as
things are in being so they are in operation.
*Can a man gather grapes of thornes, or figges
of thistles ?* saith our Blessed Saviour. Or,
*can any man bring a clean thing out of an un-
clean ?* was the question put by holy Job.

Ever since man eat the forbidden fruit,
man himself hath become a barren tree,
and cumbered the ground ; for ever, since
man voluntarily fell, man hath been under
a necessity of sin, a necessity, I say, pro-
ceeding not from Gods peremptory decree
but his feeble and corrupted will ; for its a
voluntary necessity ; should I set open the
door of this defiled cage and present to
your view the misery, lapsed mans unhappy-
ness

piness hath reduced him to, or give you but a glimpse of those polluted birds whose habitation is in the house of every soul by nature; or but read a Lecture of mans depraved condition, I could do it in no other language, then that of Esay,
from the sole of the foot even unto the Head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores, &c. Esay, the 1 c. & 6. v. so total a defection hath seized upon our nature that not now the pool of Bethesda, or the waters of Jordan must be washt in to heal our Leprosie; but the fountain of life set open by a crucified Saviour to wash and bath our sinful souls for sin and for uncleanness; yea so foul is our Crime, that it hath made man out of order both in Soul and Body; His very spirituals are much carnalized; look upon him in his soul, and that you'll find is amiss and very much disordered.

I In the understanding, which is the eye of the soul, is there not much dimness contracted? & if the light that is in us, be darkness how great must our decay in sight needs be? What St. Paul saith of the Gentiles is true of every one of us by nature, in Eph. 4. 18. *having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts:* and un-till he, the power of whose death, tore in

pieces the Temples vail, rent the vail of ignorance from off our rocky hearts, we did abide benighted with the black clouds of sin and rebellion, it being just with the Almighty either totally to Eclipse, or finally to withdraw that spiritual light our wills voluntarily cast away, as being puffed up with an overweening conceit of being made like Omnipotency it self in the knowledge of good and evil. Such towering thoughts being likely to lead to no other place but that of darkness, yea and that irremediable too, without the assistance of that true light graciously promised to enlighten every soul that cometh into the world; for our nature hath not onely led us from the way of truth, but the best discerning our souls have is onely to find our selves involved in misery and a total deprivation of good. So that you see our understanding can onely let us know our selves miserable, but can no way relieve us.

2 The will is perverse, and utterly unconformable to the law of God: the relish of *Eves* forbidden fruit is still fresh on the palate of every son of *Adam*, delighting to go astray rather then follow the straight rules of Gods command, so that he puts his people to their *moi*, and since he cannot affright us with our dangerous estate nature hath left us in (by its unskill-
ful

ful choice,) he would faine convince all men of their extreme madness, putting the question with a *quare moriemini? Why will ye dye O house of Israel?* Ezek. 18. 31. and the more folly you will finde lodges in the heart of every man who wilfully turns off from the truth of Gods law, if you but seriously consider that his inducement thereunto arises from no experienced comforts he ever found in those gilded vanities, which most account the worlds pleasures, or fleeting trifles which are reckoned for profit; for we have all good reason to believe *Solomons* knowledge, who distilled all the quintessence of sublunary beings into his own cup of delight, and whats the summe total at the foot of this account? you may take it in his own language, *I have seen all the works that are done under the Sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of Spirit, Eccles. 1. ch. 14.* vanity in their being, and vexation of spirit in their operation, for they are no other but pricking goads, and stinging thornes in the sides and hands of him that enjoys them; so that by this time you may well sit down and take up a lamentation both on the behalf of your selves and others, that so great folly should be entailed upon your actions, as voluntarily to run from the straight path that leads to eternal life, and wilfully to follow the perverse guidance

Sejanus, incipiente adhuc potentia, bonis consiliis notescere volebat.
Tacit. Annal. l. 4. p. 116.

of your own unbounded appetite; & seeing therefore there is so much evil in vice, and so great glory in virtue, that even wicked men would appear godly, that *Sejanus* (himself whilst a young courtier) took care for nothing but to grow famous by his integrity; let us al learn this pious prudence to run with speed to heavens merciful throne, and with incessant cries beg that our crooked mans will may be made straight by the guidance of Gods commands.

3 Our affections are placed upon wrong objects, (for its the object and the end, together with the manner of performance, which makes every action either good or evil;) we covet our own pleasure and are unsatisfied without it, though the purchasing thereof cost us no less then the loss of Gods heavenly countenance; such fools have we made our selves, that our chief delight is folded up in the enjoyment of a few transitory beings, forgetting the onely Jewel which the worlds treasure is of too mean a value to make purchase of; for as one saith well, *no glory that's woven in the finest tapestry of this world, but will lose colour, decay and perish, whereas saving grace and the knowledge of Iesus Christ is ητηματος οει a possession for eternity;*) and we are so wedded to our carnal interests, that we cannot endure

dure to have mention made of their removal, and are so besotted with their imaginary beauty, that we seek to cover all their deformities ; dealing with our affectionate lusts as the painter did with *Antigonus*, who had but, one eye, he drew his picture *imagine lusca* half-faced, and so buried the deformity out of the beholders sight ; We usually present our seeming contents with the fair face of outward joy, while in the mean time we draw a curtain before their cloven foot and stinging tail ; such is the unhappiness our first parents folly hath reduced us to, that we naturally choose the evil and let pass the good ; court the shadow, and let the substance flee away : Greedy affection was the inlet of our sinne and misery, and still the same porter keeps open the doors for our unruly appetites. With how much eagerness therefore should we endeavour to get our desires and affections placed upon their proper object ? that so they may attain the truest end, by the rightest means, and not rest contented with a few lifeless wishes and cold desires, which at the best (as one saith well) can gain but this mean character, (*bene cogitare est bene somniare*) a good thinker is but a good dreamer, whose awakened sight serves onely to let him see he hath but the cloud instead of *Inno* ; therefore above all things it teaches us the truth of this lesson,

that

Mercy and Judgement.

that needs must men do evil whose very affections are wrong placed: Our souls being amiss we must needs do amiss, for man is borne to evil as naturally as the sparks flye upward, saith holy *Job*; for the best of men without renewing grace are *ἀνεργαθεῖοι τὸν ψυχὴν*, men of perverse and depraved minds; till then all we preach or learn, is but as *new wine put into old bottles*, whose strength their weakness cannot contain: or as a *new peece in an old garment*; it may help a little to patch up our lives and actions, but at length that natural acquired knowledge which with much study, labour, and sorrow we have obtained, will but aggravate our sins, and make the rupture of our consciences the more desperate and wide, therefore while others fit mourning over the loss of some terrene bliss, which perhaps was gone before truly enjoyed, let us bewail the true depravation of that real goodness once given to the first, and now profered us by believing in the second *Adam*. It were folly beyond compare for rebels to imagine that a pardon can be merited by resistance; such sturdy okes must be cut down, not bowed; and cannot we make the case our own? drawing this sure conclusion, that while at enmity with God no peace of conscience, no joy in the Holy Ghost; and that we are traiterous

traterous rebels beyond all contradiction and dispute.

For there is a double rebellion:

1 Of the soul against God, *Rom. 3.*

10. As it is written, *there is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God, &c.* and likewise he goes on, shewing the totality of this rebellion, *verses 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.* drawing up this conclusion *ver. the 16.* *destruction and misery are in their wayes, and the way of peace have they not known,* *there is no fear of God before their eyes.* When once the reigns of loyalty are laid in the neck of licentious liberty, there can be expected nothing but ruine and calamity; you have already seen the defection that reigns predominant in the three principal faculties of every unregenerate soul; from which it must necessarily follow, if the streams abound with so much pollution, the fountain and spring must needs overflow with corruption; it is the unsanctified heart that occasions all unnatural heats and quarrels against God and his righteous Law; *Whence come wars and fightings?* (*saith S. James;*) *come they not hence?*

4. *James 1.* viz. from a lusty and unsanctified principle that hath taken possession of our souls? for ever since man eat of the forbidden fruit the envious one hath endeavoured to steal the seed of Gods grace

grace out of his heart, that so he might with greater freedome have the larger room wherein to sow his own Tares ; so that no way can peace be expected from us, but by true contrition, and holy submission ; to carry our dead souls in the armes of faith to Jesus the onely true mediatour , and beg of him to take away the partition-wall which our sins had erected ; that so our reconciliation being wrought by him, we may have strong consolation through believing.

2. As there is a rebellion of the soul against God ; so, secondly, it followes, that there is a rebellion in the senses against the soul, *Rom. 7. c. 21.* *I find then a law, that when I would do good evil is present with me:* and if the great Apostle found such struglings within his sanctified spirit, what reason sure have we to make complaint, whose senses are continually boiling up with fiery passions and enormous lusts ? as might easily be made appear, would your patience grant me the liberty but to particularize, and shew you how each sense apart hath joyned in conspiracy against the soul : and Ile begin

1. With Hearing, that once heavenly organ, whose delight was in nothing, when created, but to hear the heavenly Anthems the glorious Quire of Angels continually sing with changeable parts, and unspeakable

able ravishment, in praise of their and his Creator ; or to receive the lively oracles, and upright rules of life, from the mouth of God himself : but alas, no sooner had the soul sinned then the ear was stopped from the former glorious sounds ; and that voice which before was pleasant to *Adam* innocent, is now terrible and intolerable to the same person naked : and what is now our imployment, but to listen after those thiugs that cannot profit, or else to attend to that which will certainly bring punishment ? The most heavenly charmer with all his melting rhetorick cannot unstopp the ear of an obdurate impenitent, but he will persist in the hearkening to those diabolicall lectures, whose doctrine is deceitful, and application damnable ; whose propositions are to teach us to sow the seeds of sin, and Uses, to persuade us to reap the fruits thereof. That this is a truth beyond control I need fetch no further arguments then your own sad experience, whose daily practice bespeaks the woful knowledge you have thereof.

2 The sense of Seeing also is not without its interest, in complotting how by rebellion to ruine our souls. Indeed I find it sometimes the threatening of Gods angry curse as the punishment of a rebellious people, *that seeing they may not see, lest they should*

should be converted and live, *Esay 9. 10.* though for the most part it is the subject of his complaint against both Prince and subjects, Priest and people, as you may see at large up and down that prophecy, that by a kind of spiritual adultery, the sight of men is divorced from that object which is best: and do we not find, that these optick nerves of ours which were made only to be the recesses of glorious and immortal objects, are by us made the casements and inlets to all kinds of folly & madness that now our blear eyes are either offended with every beam of light, the sun of righteousness darts upon us (so miserable is the decay of our sight in respect of its noblest capacity and operations) or else in its luxuriancy and wantonness runs out, glaring upon vain and unprofitable things, to the breeding of base disorder and unreasonableness in our minds: πᾶν τῶν γοῦ ἀλογον
saith St. Chrysost. wicked men are unreasonable men: are they not without understanding that work wickedness? saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 14.14.* such is the extravagancy of our natural sight, that it for the most part makes way to the blindness of our spiritual sight.

3 Smelling; which once was like that of a pleasant field which the Lord hath blessed, is now by sinne become abominable, to God and nauseous to our selves, we lost the

the favour of that good ointment, for which
the Virgin daughters of Sion should love us; our
smell is now become earthly, and by a sinful
dejection we bend our souls downwards,
for having in *Adam* lost the smell of those
garments, more pleasant then that of *Leba-
nus*, we are now with holy *Job* content to
sit and enjoy the favour of a dunghill;
there is a filth, and stench remaining in the
heart and conscience of every impenitent
sinner, that the sweet perfumes of a pure
mind and upright spirit, which continually
refresh the heaven-borne souls, are for-
raign, and have no alliance to them whose
minds are overwhelmed with the turbulent
cares of a tossed world, whose impatient bil-
lows serve but to force them so much the
nearer dangers brink: therefore let no man
please himself in any sensual enjoyments,
for they are the wicked mans portion; and
as we are unwilling to undergo their smart,
so let us refuse their seeming pleasure, lest
we find such gilded pills to be but the
forerunner of a bitter potion.

4 Tasting comes in also for its share in
the unprofitable merchandise sinne hath
brought poor man as the return of all his
unlawful actions; indeed its holy *Davids*
Exhortation *that we should fast and see how
good the Lord is*; but happy is the man that
hath so much wisdome, for we are so viti-
ated with the practice of evil, that we have

Cant. 4.
11.

no palate at all to relish heavenly food, minding rather to patch up our decaying carcases, which are daily veterascent and mouldring away, then the taking hold of any opportunity that may lead us to partake and taste of those immortal joyes whose duration runs parallel with eternity; Temptations to evil alwaies appearing big with a promising fruition of pleasantness: so that with *Eves* deceived eye, we are often prevailed with to trie and taste their goodness, fleeing from all holy consultation, till with her we pay no less then the smart of a troubled mind for the satisfying of an unbridled lust. I question not but your own experience can sadly witness the truth of this assertion, that impatient and immoderate desires after carnal pleasures alwayes return laden with the intolerable burden of grief and sorrow.

5 Touching; which is the fifth sense that suffers with us and for our transgression, evil appetites being borne do also grow up with us; the consideration whereof induced me the rather to stretch the line of your patience to a particular enumeration thereof, that so beholding our vileness we might be brought to consider, that the sins of our bodies and senses, such as are lusts, will wither in time, and decay of themselves; but sinful habits, and spiritual wickedness, which vitiate and corrupt the mind,

mind (except in this life they be put off by grace) will continue to infect and oppress our souls to eternity ; of how much concernment then is it for us all to lay hold on those things that will stand by and witness for us in a day of trouble ? We see the drowning man will catch at a straw, rather then let pass any thing that with safety may bring him to the shore ; and our selves are curious , and careful to lay hold on those means that will either purchase or preserve temporal safety ; oh why then should we not be as wise for our spiritual estate , *to lay up treasure where neither moth nor rust can come, to decay or lessen it ?* In a word, by all that hath been said, it plainly appears that the subject of sinne is the soul, and the body is the instrument that subject works by ; therefore sinne is said *to reign in our mortal bodies :* so then the proposition is true not onely of them that with *Ahab* sell themselves for sinne ; making merchandise of that invaluable gemme, which a righteous man would purchase with the loss of life it self (could any thing but the blood of God make redemption thereof) or them that make a league with sinne and death ; but even the saints of God also make too true a proof of this assertion : Holy *David*, a man after Gods own heart, is sometimes found following the devises of his own, though his

freedom therefrom cost him no less then a bedewed couch , or broken bones ; such fruit must all the sowers of sin expect to gather. Nay holy *Job* gives the same testimony against himself, in 9. *Job* 20. *If I justifie my self, my own mouth shall condemne me ; if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.*

And if the task would not procure wearisomness to your patience , I might in tracing holy ground , present you with variety of examples out of sacred Writ; *Lot* was no sooner delivered from devouring fire , but himself presently burnes in unnatural lust: *Noah* hath not long escaped the floods of waters , but himself is drowned in a deluge of wine; and he that was to be the rock upon which Christ will build his Church , he himself falls from the spiritual rock Christ Jesus; and *if this be done in the green tree, what will come of the drie?* that are no sooner tempted, but yield, assaulted, but embrace it, like the willing bulrush continually sink into its nourishment the filth and mire of a roaring sea ; so that the Pelagians impec-cant purity , and the Donatists unspotted sanctity, are but Apochryphal, and will ne-
ver be inserted into the Christians Creed, for we must say with holy *David* , in the words of my Text , *If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, Lord,*
who

who can abide it? And the reasons of it are cleare.

1 Because not onely our nature alone is found active in evil, but it hath drawn in the will and affections also to be its companions in sin; a truth which but now I have preacht to your ears, my whole time for the most part hitherto being spent in the narration of our corruption both in soul and body, of the rebellion of each against other, and both against God; so that if we eye our selves as the objects of Gods anger, nothing but everlasting destruction can be expected; the soul sins, and the sin is conveyed thereunto by the organs of the body, which by a free consent are joyned in rebellion against the Father of lights; whose vengeance, if severe in reckoning, must be expected to destroy us.

2 Because its easier in it self for man to do amiss than to walk uprightly; for there must be the concurrence of all circumstances to denominate an action good, whereas the defection and want but of one will make it become evil. Our very conception is in sin, therefore needs must there be facility for us to do amiss; we need run no further then little infants, who are but our selves multiplied, for example in this kind, how much difficulty and industry is required to work in them one moral action that may beare the name of

goodness? when, on the contrary, great restraints and much severity can scarce withhold them from multiplied acts of evil: Nay, that you may as soon bind a wolf with the guts of a tender kid, as seek to bridle an impenitent wretch with the cords of love, for by nature we are all King *Solomons* fools, who make it our pastime to do evil, but to do good have no understanding.

3 That perfect symmetry of righteousness that obtaineth life, if there be found therein but the obliquity of one act, the demerit thereof will be eternal wrath; so saith St. *James* 2. chap. 10. *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and offend in one point, is guilty of all.* Good reason then have we to stand in awe and sin not, to watch over our wayes, and be circumspect: *a little leaven will leaven the whole lump;* the smallest sin unrepented of is able to damne us, and the least law transgresst is sufficient to procure our damnation, whereas Christ's infinite merit onely can obtain our salvation; *for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God,* St. *James* 1. 20. By all which you cannot but understand the truth of our assertion, namely, its the corrupt nature of man to do amiss; together with the reasons thereof. I shall briefly make some application to our selves, and so in order pass on to the second doctrine propounded.

Use.

I Fall down to prayer, and cry out with holy *David*, *Enter not into judgement with thy servants O Lord, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified*; if in the gold of Angels there was much dust found, if those pure spirits were charged with folly, what extremity of madness, and intolerable ire may we expect as the wages of our unrighteousness? *For if thou Lord be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who can abide it?* you have seen the doctrine cleared, let us a little apply it, and so pass onto the last conclusion.

Application.

Oh consider this ye that forget God, lest he destroy you, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you. *Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea?* Jeremiah 5. 22. *fear not them that can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell;* saith our Saviour, 10. S. Mat. 28. for patience provoked turns to the greatest fury, and when the malevolent planet of Gods anger shall fall upon our heads, like the flying roll in the

5. of Zach. it will dread nothing, but everlasting destruction. Oh how should all our pulses beat at the remembrance of Gods wrath for sins ! how contracted our span of time, and how trembling should our clay cottages appear ! how much better were it for us to measure out the ground by our length before him , and in humility to kiss the rod, then with impudent foreheads to stand it out against his vengeance ? how should we with speed lay hold and fix upon all means that may bring us near unto himself ? how willing should we be with the silken cords of his favour to be led to repentance , seeing he is so loth to be severe, and waits that he may be gracious to us ? and withal considering that if God be extreme in punishing , man must needs be extreme in suffering : which brings me to the fourth and last conclusion.

That if God be extreme in punishing, man must needs be extreme in suffering.

When thou with rebukes dost chaste man for sin , thou makest his beauty to consume like a moth , saith holy David Ps. 39.

12. But it were well if onely his beauty were gone , and his outward comeliness done away; but he adds as a greater misery, *every man is but vanity*, and every way miserable ; for what happiness can be expected when Gods heavenly countenance looks with anger upon us ? for who can bind

bind up that which God in wrath layes open ? who can speak peace to that soul whom he afflicts ? or if he withdraw , who can comfort us ? and who can abide his justice when he is severe , and looks upon us with the eyes of fiery indignation ? surely none ; for then the body will but begin the pain of the soul , and the soul endure the grief of both , then you may hear the *Shunamites* child cry out, *my head, my head* ; holy *David* complaines that *his heart is melted like wax before the sun* ; then it is that king *Asa* is sick indeed from head to foot ; that holy *Job* is sitting upon the dunghil , and cursing the day of his birth ; then, oh then indeed it is that King *David* cryes out, *his strength is dryed up like a potsherd, and that he is become like a Pelican in the wilderness* ; there you shall hear *Hezekiah* chatter like a crane , and mourn like a *Dove* : for when God is extreme in his judgements , man must needs be miserable in suffering , even in the outward man ; and yet *all these are but the beginning of sorrow* (as our Saviour saith) in comparison of those calamities that will overtake us , when our breath shal be turned into sighs , our eyes into fountains of tears , and our hearts like mournful harpes , shall be hung upon the willowes of contrition , and our organical musick into the voice of them that weep ; all which are but as so many doleful

doleful witnesses of our sufferings, when God shall come to visit for our transgressions; so that you see the doctrine cleared, and the truth thereof in lively examples illustrated. One word of application, and then my whole discourse shall be concluded.

Application.

Oh be astonished and wonder at the rich mercy of God, all you that go on in an uninterrupted course of sinning; that God hath not long since made you the subjects of eternal wrath; oh let the greatness of his patience encourage you not to go on, but repent of your sins, lest your destruction come unawares as an armed man, and there be none to deliver you. Let me therefore exhort all men to make their peace with him betimes, before death makes a separation between them and their chiefest happiness; before your souls be swallowed up in misery, and drowned with an overflowing deluge of useless tears (the onely Emblemes of a too late repentence) which shall never be wiped off with the smallest remnant of mercy, or drunk up with the least sponge of pitty and fatherly compassion; for then the Lamb slain for the redemption of your souls repenting, will be found no lese then *Judahs* Lion enthroned,

enthroned, to condemne both soul and body for wilful and impenitent sins ; so that we must all conclude with the words of my Text, *If thou Lord wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord who may abide it ?*

*Regi seculorum immortali &
invisibili, soli Deo ho-
nor & gloria,
Amen.*

SER-



SERM. II.

PSAL. 130. V. 3.

*If thou Lord be extreme, &c.*Intro-
duction.Heb. 10.
13.

The glory of the Shepherd is the thriving of the Sheep, as Saint *Chrysostome* saith; and the fatness of Christ's Lambs, is the strength of their graces; by the one the outward man is refreshed, but with the other, the inward spirit is rejoiced, and in both the glory of God is highly exalted: Heavens spotless eye endures not to behold leprous Souls with any other look, besides that of vengeance; nor can the Creature ever expect to see its Creators face, without a renewed mind; *For without Holiness no man shall ever see God*, Heb. 12. 14. We are but stubble to his consuming fire, so that while we are in a state of sinning, we are liable to damnation, *It being a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, whose just severity will wound the hairy scalp of such as willfully go astray: why then should we be so stupidly ignorant as to passe on in a way of

of sin, casting all fear of danger behind us, as if we were able to encounter devouring fire, or dwell with everlasting burning? especially when we consider but our own frame, we cannot but know we are but dust, and that which is our mould will soon decay; and withal rememb'ring our time is but short, and the word, *redder rationem*, backt with a *Thou fool*, may this night be given suddenly; and then assuredly *as the tree falls, so it lies*; and in the same condition must we appear at Gods Tribunal. Oh then with what circumspection should our actions be performed, lest any evil or vicious habits should square themselves to joyn with us in our holiest Oblations! because we pretend service to him whose power in a few words can write great Monarchs into trembling, and can make a hair, or the kernel of a raisin as mortal as a *Goliath's* spear; and can with ease blow down our bubbling lives into nothing; for the time is coming, when not *astuta verba*, but *pura corda*, (as Saint Bernard saith) not *fair words*, but *honest hearts* will prevail and commend us to him who judgeth all things; for he will infatuate all fallacious wisdom and self-destroying wit; *For thou art the God that hast no pleasure in wickedness, nor shall any evil dwell with thee*, saith holy *David, Psal. 5. 4.* So that Holiness is

Adrian 4.

is now the onely path that leads weary and wandering souls to the Paradise of Celestial Blisse ; all other wayes being severely kept against us by the flaming sword of Gods irreconcileable anger and hatred against sin and sinners ; for *no un-holy thing shall enter* (much lesse remain) *in the Holy City* ; all such shall be cast out, *Rev. 21.27.* A good nature, like a shallow brook, may empty it self into the narrow river of *Humane love* ; but perfect Holiness, and real Sanctity is only that noble stream which carries the soul to Heaven, and loses it in the Ocean of infinite Blisse. You may for a time sport your selves with the fire of lustful pleasures, but 'ere you are aware, the flame thereof will not onely kindge your gilded wings of ambitious desires which so long bore you up with the breath of popular applause, but also consume your soul and body in endless woe and misery ; for when *God shall come in flaming fire, he will render vengeance to all that are ungodly* ; not enduring longer to have the cry of our sins to come up before him : and therefore holy *David* well considered this Meditation, when he broke forth with the words of my Text :

If thou Lord will be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord who may abide it ?

In which words we have already considered two general parts.

1 An Antecedent.

2 A consequent. Or if you will, here is

1 The *Thesis*.

2 The *Hypothesis*.

In the first you have Gods extremity in punishing.

In the second you have mans misery in suffering, for he saith: *If thou Lord be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord who may abide it?*

From which sacred concession, we have enedavoured to wind up the sum and substance of holy *Davids* intention into these four bottoms or doctrinal conclusions, *viz.*

1 It is the corruption of mans nature to do amiss.

2 God is not alwayes extreme to punish man when he hath done amiss.

3 God can when he pleases be extreme in punishing man when he hath done amiss.

4 If God be extreme in punishing, man must needs be extreme in suffering.

Thus far our general division hath had its equal course; and our progress in the dispatch of these truths hath but quitted the first, and made entrance upon the second, which together with the two latter, accompanied with your patience, shall at this time terminate my hours discourse. And that I may with the more benefit to your under-

1.

2.

3.

4.

understanding proceed therein, I shall one-
ly lead your memories back to the second
conclusion, namely

Doct. 2.

*The mercy of God is such, he will not al-
waies be extreme to mark whats done amiss.*

Examples of Gods patience and long
forbearance have no where such lively re-
presentations as in our selves, whose un-
consumed lives are nothing else but a series
of continued mercy ; nor is there any rati-
onal account to be rendred for the same
save onely that *it is the good will of him that
dwelleth in the bush*, whose glory is not to
be given to another ; and *that he will have
mercy on whom he will have mercy*, &c.
Which he doth

- 1 For his name sake, *Exodus 34. 6.*
- 2 For his natures sake, which is al-
waies prone to shew mercy.
- 3 For his glories sake, and that
 - 1 In general.
 - 2 In particular.
 - 1 In general, it is the constant lan-
guage of holy Scripture, as you have al-
ready heard.
 - 2 In particular, he is not extreme for
his Glory sake, which is great in many re-
spects.
 - 1 In respect of his judgements, for they
are *his strange work*, and never had he fel-
icity in executing the same, but with an
unwilling willingness is alwayes constrain-
ed

ed to visit for the sins, whether of nations, cities, or particular persons; witness his sending the Gospel to *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, his low condescension to *Abraham*, when he became Advocate for *Sodom*; and his own tears over *Jerusalem's* approaching ruin; yea and witness the repentings that were kindled in his bowels for revolting *Ephraim*: but mercy is his *delight, because he waits to be gracious.*

2 Great in respect of time, for the mercy of God endures for ever, in *Ps. 136*. As his power is unlimited, so neither can bounds be set to his mercy; sun and moon, heaven and earth, these all have their periods, but the rich treasure of Gods mercy shall have no end: *I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandement is exceeding broad*, saith holy David. *Ps. 119.96*. All the attributes of God like himself are from everlasting to everlasting.

3 Great in extent of place, for *his mercy reaches unto the clouds*, *Psal. 36. 6,7*. *Thy mercy O Lord is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds*. *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, thy judgements are as a great deep*; *Lord, &c.* Gods extended grace makes its full appearance not onely in delivering from danger, but in supplying our wants; not onely in saving our bodies from temporal evils, but in redeeming our souls from eternal

damnation, for with him is great deliverance.

4 Great in extent of plenty, for God is rich in mercy; *Eph. 2. 4.* But God (saith the Apostle) *who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us*, &c. as if St. Paul had spoke his mind in larger phrases thus; You are poor and needy, you want blessings temporal and spiritual, and know not whither to flee for succour and supply, so that the narrowness of your hearts imagines Gods free hand is straitened; but let no such scruple bear rule in your minds; for with God is so great a treasure of grace as never can be exhausted, such riches of mercy as can admit of no decrease; for God is rich in mercy, and great in love; yea and he accounts it his glory *to pass by iniquity, transgression and sinne.* O then who would not be in love with him that is so lovely in goodness; who would not in want flee to him for salvation, who is so rich in mercy, *that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life? John 3. 15.*

5 Great in respect of his works; *for his mercy is over all his works.* If you survey Gods curious architecture in creating of the world, you'll find mercy communicating its goodness to poor man, in making him possessor and Lord of so rich a dominion; nor

nor were the hands of mercy bound up by mans rebellion, or consumed by the Angels flaming sword, but it took its proper leat to make restauration of his own most glorious Image in the death of his beloved Son, which is and will be manifested to the whole world; the Gospel of the ever-blessed *Iesus* being that holy city set upon a hill, unto which all nations are invited to come and make their habitation; each word of truth made manifest before us being a particular cal to every individual son of *Adam* to come and embrace him, the power of whose resurrection will raise their dead souls from a state of sinne to newness of life: and thus hath mercy rid triumphant through the whole proceedings betwixt a faithful God and a rebellious creature.

4 God is not alwaies extrem to mark what is done amiss in respect of his Saints & elected ones, for they are his beloved, and his delight, for whose sake alone the foundations of the earth are kept firme, and not thrown into the midst of a bottomless sea: God is not willing (to use holy *Abrahams* ex-postulation) *to destroy the righteous with the wicked*; no, for *tens* sake *destruction shall not fall upon a people or city*: & if any doubt the truth of this assertion, let them but peruse the 12. chap. of *Genesis*, where they shall find the great unwillingness the father of

compassions doth express to go about the destruction of that sinful city with righteous judgement, which to him is accounted *a strange work*: nay it shall go well with *Potiphars* house and *Pharaohs* court also, if upright *Joseph* dwell therein: He'll defer his plagues to another generation rather then his children should suffer; or else, which is far better, they shall be taken away from the evil to come, that their blest eyes may never see what utter ruine divine vengeance doth bring upon a sinful peopl; therefore for his elect sake he will not alwaies be angry.

5 In respect of the reprobate, he is not alwaies extreme to mark what they have done; and that upon a two-fold account:

1 To let them see their just condemnation.

2 In respect of judgement.

1 To let them see the justice of their condemnation, that though he hath long spared them, and given them space and opportunity to repent, yet they have chose their own destruction by a wittul impenitency; nay God complains in the Prophet *Esay*, *All the day long have I stretched out my arme to a rebellious people, &c.* (but saith he) *I will not alwaies keep silence, but will recompence, even recompence into their bosome*, *Esa. 65. 9.* their continued rebellion it makes God ingeminat his threatened

ned severity, which though he be loth to execute, yet he will not alwayes be silent, abused patience turning into the greatest fury : witnessse his passionate compassion over sinfull *Ierusalem*, whom thus he speaks ; *Oh Ierusalem, Ierusalem, which killest the Prophets, and stonest them that were sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not?* There is their times for re-pentance, but now upon their neglect and abuse thereof must needs follow Gods severest vengeance : for so it follows, *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate, &c.* Luke 13. 34, 35. Yea, thus he dealeth with *Iezabel* her self, that mother of Fornications ; *I gave her space* (saith the merciful God) *but she repented not, therefore behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds, and I will kill her children with death,* Rev. 2. 21, 22. By all which (as in a chrystral mirrour) you may clearly see the sad event which continually attends an impenitent state ; Gods mercy affords us space, and leaves us without excuse, but his Justice will certainly punish us if we repent not.

2. In respect of Judgment ; shall I call it a mercy to the wicked, that God suffers

them to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath ? had it not been a greater mercy rather to have cut them off by shortning of their dayes ? for by it surely something had been substraeted from their torments, which is proportioned to, and measured out by their sins : but that God should in Judgment spare them , to prosper in sin, that they may sin themselves finally into perdition, and spare them that the sin may grow as old as the sinner, that he may go into his grave with bones full of sinne : though, on the one hand, their length of dayes shewes Gods unwearied patience, yet, on the other hand, it gives full proof of their final intolerable misery. God then is not alwayes extreme in punishing of sinne, and that in respect of Judgment to the persons guilty ; he will not presently destroy the *Amorites*, though their sins come up with a loud cry before him ; no, there is a measure of sinne to be filled up as well by Nations as particular persons, before the decree go forth, and Judgment come upon a Land , to the utter ruine thereof ; nay, a Nation may be arrived to the very *Zenith* of Sinne, and yet Judgment not immediately follow, witness *Jerusalem* (and oh that *England* might not be brought in for a testimony also ! I mean as not deserving what she did) for they had committed the greatest of sinnes,

sinnes, in not only slaying the Prophets, stoning them that preacht repentance unto them, but also in killing the Lord of Glory; and yet God spared that rebellious City forty two years after; which shews that God is not alwayes extreme with them that are come to the *Zenith* of sinne. Oh therefore let *Jerusalem* space of repentance move us to turn unto the Lord with speed, lest we also perish in our sinnes, and there be none to deliver; *For God will make his power known, that his name may be declared throughout the earth,* Rom.9.17. Thus in respect of Sinners unconverted, of Saints that are converted, and of Reprobates that will not be converted, God is not alwayes extreme to punish. And so I have done with the second conclusion, and shall onely make a little Application thereof to our selves, and so passe to the third observable in the Text.

Application.

1. Admire the riches of Gods mercy, that he alwayes punishes not according to our sinnes, and is not alwayes extreme in observing when we have sinned: mercy it was that the Almighty at first did make man, who stood in no need of the best of Creatures, and their most pious services; but

greater mercy, that the Holy One should not utterly destroy man when he had sinned, and that his patience should forbear destroying sinful flesh; a God of so pure a nature that he cannot behold sinne without hatred, and yet a God of so rich mercy, that he saves the soul when it hath sinned, proclaiming himself to be the Lord, gracious and merciful, passing by iniquity, transgression and sinne: the consideration whereof made S. Chrysostome cry out, *Lord, what am I to thee, that thou shouldest command me to love thee, and when I love thee not thou art angry, seeing its misery enough not to love thee; and when I sinne and run from thee, yet thou waitest still to be gracious to me, and leavest no means unattempted that may make me love thee?* And Saint Austin I remember hath this expression, *God, (saith he) is weary of our sinnes, and is pressed with them as a cart heavy laden with sheaves; and why doth he not rid himself of us who sinne wilfully in contempt of him, but casts our sinnes behind his back, as if no dishonour were done to his Holy Name by them?* Why doth he thus (saith that holy Father, expostulating with himself) but meerly because he will not be extreme with us? O therefore admire the riches of Gods mercy, who gives you space to repent, and by no means wils your death. Oh I beseech you then, if you expect that

God

God should make your souls incessantly happy in his eternity, be you holy (*in tua aeternitate*, as Saint Bernard saith) in thy limited and short eternity, that so you may come to see, not his footsteps or back parts, but his glorious face, by an immediate intuition of his Majesty: O think with your selves how your souls shall then be filled with glory and happiness!

O præclarum & invidendum spectaculum!
Oh what a sea and inundation of unspeakable Joy must needs flow in upon the Soul! and will you not stand and admire the riches of that grace which gives you space and means for the obtaining of so great a blessing?

2 This may move every one to begin, and, if begun, to increase their repentance; the Lord is ready to forgive, and *with thee is mercy* (saith the verse following my Text) *therefore shalt thou be feared*. Our sacrifice and propitiation can be nothing as from our selves, its onely Jesus Christ the righteous that can satisfie Gods offended justice for our sinnes; *For if any man sinne, we have an advocate with the Father, Iesus Christ the righteous*, 1 John 2. 1. This is that pearl of great price which hath redeemed us from our Sins, this is the Propitiation with which God is well pleased, and is now become, not our angry Judge, but reconciled Father; for

Mercy and Judgement.

for were he a Judge, and not our Father, he would be extreme to mark our actions; and were he severe, and not mercifull, we could not stand before him; *But with thee is mercy that thou maist be feared*, Psal. 130.4. And in his Beloved he is now made one with us; the partition-wall which sin had erected, by his suffering is now destroyed and broken down, that so we may now come with boldness to the throne of Grace, having an High Priest pleading continually for us, and one who knows what it is to bear our sinnes, and endure our sorrows. *Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the whole armour of light, that so we may be able to stand in the evil day.*

But withall, let us take heed of taking occasion to live in sinne because God is merciful, and because he is gracious, to turn that grace which should save us into wantonness; this is to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, and to lay upon our selves a mark of reprobation: for though it be true of our God what Ben-hadads servants said of the Kings of Israel, *we have heard that they are merciful Kings*; so you may say, if we sin, yet our God is merciful to forgive; and so sinne, that grace may abound: do not thus deceive your souls; for the same God that is a merciful Father to true Penitents, is also

a jealous Lord over wretched sinners, and will, like *Iehu*, drive on his Judgments furiously against rebellious sinners, and will wound the hairy scalp of all Impenitents. Behold therefore the goodness, and the severity of God; severity to them that go on in sinne impenitently, but goodness to them which truly repent, *Rom. 11.22.* Oh therefore let me perswade you whose souls as yet sit in darkness, and in a state of sinne, to awaken your selves out of this woful security; consider, if thou turn to the Lord with all thy heart, and truly art sorry for thy sinnes, consider I say, he is ready to forgive, and waits that he may be gracious to thy immortal Soul for which Christ dyed: but on the other hand, if thou continue in sinne, know assuredly, thou vile impenitent, he will come in flames of fire, to revenge himself upon thy implacable and immalleable heart: Oh therefore, while its called to day, harden not your selves against his fear, but get your peace made with him ere it be too late: and you that have already begun, do you persevere unto the end, that so you may receive that crown of Life which shall never be taken from you, for he will not alwayes be extreme with you; and yet severe with those that continue in sinne, because when he pleases, he can be extreme to mark what is done amiss:

and

and that brings me to the third Observation.

Third Observation.

That God can when he pleases be extreme in punishing man when he hath done amiss.

The will and the power of God in themselves are the same, though to our corrupt understandings they seem distinct, because our irregular wills are confined by a limited power; and though God may do what he will with his Creatures, because he is Omnipotent, yet when they have sinned, he doth not alwayes will their destruction, because he is merciful; his Omnipotent and executing power being alwayes limited by the will of mercy, when he comes to deal with sinners for their transgressions, though God when he list can be extreme to punish. See the proof of this :

1. *A priori.*

2. *A posteriori.*

1. *A priori*; The power of God is infinite, and that infinity of his is omnipotent; as he can make a *Genesis* to give being, so also an *Exodus* to destroy that being; as there is in him a power to create, so an infinite justice to destroy that

that creation when made: though he create light out of darkness, because he is the parent of Infiniteness, so also is he Omnipotent, and can when he pleases will the new light into its ancient state of darkness; the same Word that gave the world a being, can carry her again to the grave of destruction, leaving her in the same confused Chaos which his merciful goodness at first found her in; and the same six dayes which past away in building of her up (if it so please him) with as much facility may take it down, though his excellent Mercy will have no less then six thousand years to bring a period to the same, as most learned interpreters expound the words of Saint Peter, 2 Pet. 3.8. So that *a priori* you see there is power enough in God, not only to be angry with, but infinitely to punish the sinnes of his people.

2. *A posteriori*: Who sees Nebuchadnezzar grazing like an Ox, and acknowledges not Gods Power to be Infinite, and can do with ease what seemeth good in his sight? who sees Belshazar in the midst of his carousing cups weighed in the ballance of the Sanctuarie, and found too light, and acknowledges not his Justice? who sees Goshen full of light, and Egypt covered with thick darkness, and acknowledges not an Infinite Deity? Examples

amples are most profitable illustrations of his power in dealing with the sonnes of men, and in this case are almost infinite. What son of *Adam* is there that knows not of his fathers fall, and the dreadful curse the just consequent thereof? *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, Gen. 2.17. and it was surely performed; witness *Cains* inability to bear the loud cry of his brothers blood; *Cham* justly cursed by his Father, as the reward of his shameful action; *Esau* sadly, and too late seeking a sold Blessing; the flames of provoked fire licking up sinful *Sodom*; the earth of her self making a grave for *Corah* and his wicked Complices; the great deeps swallowing up *Pharaoh* and his Host, as the just avenger of his intolerable Persecution. But these are but temporal evils; but there are eternal miseries; for when he is extreme, his eyes shall not spare his enemies. But you'll say, what means this? Can God destroy that which he hath made? Can he that delights in man, destroy or despise the works of his hands? Will he pluck down with one hand what but now he built? And can he laugh when their fear comes, who hath sworn he delights not in the sinners death? Nothing less; yet we must not say with *Job*, *I am righteous, though he hath condemned me*; for *shall not the Judge of all the earth do right*,

right, and glorifie himself in, and upon his Creatures ? For if we go astray, he must and will *hedge up our way with thornes.*

Though it is true, God afflicts not willingly, yet he doth, and will punish the sonnes of men when they sinne and wilfully go astray ; and that for these reasons :

1. To remove that grand idol which men make, and set up in their own hearts, that God is all mercy, and will not punish, or all love , and cannot endure to afflict his people : deceive not your selves with such vain delusions, for *the soul that sinneth that soul shall surely die*, Ezek. 18. 4. As sure as there is a God that mercifully saves them that repent, so sure will the same God infinitely punish them that continue in sin ; as it is his Mercy that offers, and invites us to accept of Salvation, so also will it be the office of his Justice infinitely to punish all those that refuse to come when called by his Word and Spirit. Remember the story of the great Supper, and Gods severe answer to them that would not come when invited : *I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my Supper*, S. Luke 14. 24. though God spare us for a time, yet he will *send forth Judgment unto victory.*

2. To remove the Atheism that lodges in mens hearts, of no revenging Justice ; that

that men live and speak as if there was no God, uttering that in words and actions which holy *David's* fool entertained in his heart; that men being to think there is no God, because they see no fearful examples of his Justice set before them in the destruction of his enemies; that the wicked's prosperity in evil makes him boast himself, and despise his Maker. I remember Saint *Austin* brings in the proud man, speaking thus; when he was at peace, and no disturbance injured him, saith he of himself, *if I had nothing worth despising I should be a God*; blasphemously imagining God were ignorant of that which men call contempt: but saith the Father, *It was not long ere I saw the same wretch cast down with utter amazement by a small clap of thunder*: when God did but seem to clothe himself with the garment of vengeance, he presently fell down with humble obeisance. Therefore God will sometimes be extreme in punishing, that he may rescue the glory of his justice out of the hands of the wicked.

3 Such is the nature of sinne, it justly provokes God to be extreme, because

1 Its a transgression of his righteous law; and if earthly Monarchs punish their rebels with temporal, well may the Lord of Heaven and earth reward his traitors with eternal death; if temporal magistrates are

so tender of their precepts, that they esteem each breach thereof as an injury done to their persons, well may the Father of spirits cast away with scorne all those that are found fighters against his commands. But that's not all; for

2 Every sin is not onely a transgression of Gods law, but its an injury offered to his sacred person; there being no act of evil wherein our whole man deliberately concurs, but it is as much as in us lyes to dethrone the Majesty of heaven, and if it lay in our power also, to ungod the sacred Trinity; an action which my soul trembles to think of, much more to utter; and were it not that I might leave the impression thereof so deep as to imbitter sinne unto you, I should not have named it.

But that's not all, for

3 Every sin is so much the greater, because it is committed by persons that have received all sorts of kindness, and are under all manner of obligations to the contrary; therefore well may God be extreme for sin, when found in them that are engaged to the contrary.

4 Such is the nature of Gods justice that it requires exact and equal proportion of punishment to the sinnes that have been committed; now every sinne is of an infinite duration, for did the sinner alwayes live, he would for ever be guilty of sinne;

E there-

therefore it is but just the punishment should be infinite also ; for if God reward us with glory, (if we serve him) above our deserts, can we condemn him for but rewarding us according to our faults ? and if he do spare us, and not inflict the extremity of his justice , it is because his mercy intercedes, that glorious attribute wherein is his chief delight : but God will sometimes be extreme to punish, because the nature of his justice is such as that it will proportion its punishment to our deserts , and that with speed too ; *for the time draws neer, when God will come to judge the earth righteously, and the nations with his truth, Psal. 96. 13.* He will try all things (as the refiner) by fire, which will discover and make legible that $\kappa\sigma\pi\tau\lambda\gamma\epsilon\alpha\phi\lambda\kappa\tau$, the blind and subtil characters of mens thoughts and actions, which before could not be read or perceived ; and all this by the power of his righteous judgement , and the unerring law of his revealed will , those righteous statutes, the breaking whereof will make the wicked *call to the mountains to cover them from the wrath of the Lamb*, when he shall come in flaming fire to render vengeance upon all ungodly and impenitent sinners; whose destruction is of themselves, their sins being the measure of his punishments ; *for he will reward every man according to his works, whether they be*

Mercy and Judgement.

be good or whether they be evil, for with him is no respect of persons ; for as suffers the peasant, so shall the Princes of the earth, if found in their impenitency ; if their steel melt before his fierceness, what shall man do whose clay-cottage continually sticks in the mire of sinne ? Oh sit down then, and hang your mournful harps upon the willows of contrition, cast away from you all terrene hopes of comfort, which at last, like *Egypt's* reeds, will prove no further useful, then with sorow to pierce your troubled sides ; lean no longer upon the staffe of your own understanding, lest your falling thence become irrecoverable ; but betake your selves with true and pure devotion to that golden mercy-seat, whence none ever returned empty that sought aright ; for there is no armour able to resist or divert Gods severe judgements but pious prayers and fervent ejaculations ; and no doubt but if you thus do, but he who lends an ear to the cry of speechless blood, will not turne it away from the voice of your petitions, especially if put up in the name of him, whose employment it is to propitiate for the sins of the whole world ; you must needs confess your selves sinners, and if living and dying such, you may be sure the end thereof will be eternal misery ; Therefore its every mans great concernment, as he would

escape the last, to provide against the former; and the sooner the better, because we know not how soon our accounts will be demanded, and God come with, *ah thou fool, this night shall thy soul be taken from thee, &c.* Therefore to day while its called to day let's hear his voice, and not harden our hearts against him.

2 Seeing none can say his heart is clean, and all have reason to say, every one is more righteous then we; Oh then what fountains of tears should we shed, if possible, to bath our sinful souls in, and baptize our selves anew in penitential teares! not that the water alone hath any cleansing virtue in it, (for the very springs must be purged by the rock Jesus Christ) yet contrition is ofttimes an inseparable signe of being cleansed; for when sins by us are truly repented of, Gods favourable eye of compassion looks on those sins as if they were never committed; and where our sins look *as red as crimson*, we must endeavour to have our tears *as white as snow*, that falling sincerely from the eye of a true penitentiary they prevail with the father of mercies to pass over our souls when his judgements begin to be executed; so then we must put off the redness of guilt, that so we may be clothed with the white robe of innocency, by getting our sins and iniquities blotted out. But do not deceive

ceive your selves, it is not a seeming holiness, or appearing innocency, acquired by our own strength, that will avail us; such weak lights are easily blown out and extinct by the gust of every temptation; or like the costly gilt of a well-tuned instrument, appearing pleasant while such, but when once the strings begin to jar, the impatient hand with fury casts both them and all its beauty from it, as if no such loveliness had ever there been found. Therefore above all things tis our concernment to make sure work in the things of eternity, not taking them upon trust, or others credit, but our own experience, not fearing others so much as our own eternall weal; for there is nothing hath been so much the bane of Christian community, as an overweening conceit of our own sanctity, saluting every man with a Pharisaical *Stand off, I am more holy then thou,* disdaining to think any are so high in Christs esteem as our selves; whereas our truest glorying is onely in the cross of Christ, and an humble heart, *which in the sight of God is of great price: For if thou Lord be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who can abide it?* And this brings me to the second observation propounded, namely,

That the mercy of God is such, he'l not awaies be extreme to mark whats done amiss.

Mercy is Gods proper work, it is that wherein his chief delight doth rest: what was reported of *Dionysius* the Emperour, and left upon record for his eternal fame, *viz.* that he wept when he came to subscribe his name to condemne a man, as being loth to dip his finger in the blood of his fellow-creature; is much more true of the Father of Mercy: witness those tears that dropt from the eyes of our Saviour over impenitent *Jerusalem*, a sad presage of approaching ruine, and yet a true symptome of his unwillingness to put the same in execution, though they were already come to the *Zenith* of impiety, killing the King of Glory, and the Saviour of the world; and though but beholding this at a distance, such was his mercy that it made him weep.

Mercy is an attribute that of it self properly belongs to God; justice is as it were by accident, because of mans evil; therefore is he said to wait to do the one, but sparing in execution of the other; yea he is unwilling to execute determined wrath; therefore he saith, *how shall I give thee up O Ephraim?* and, *I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, &c.* Hos. 11. 8, 9. therefore, *he that hateth nothing that he hath made*, will not alwaies be extreme with what he hath not made, lest with it he destroy the work of his hands: for the mer-

cy of God is exercised towards man as considered in a twofold capacity.

1. As a sinner.

2. As his creature.

1. As a sinner ; that he may *do away his sins*, Isa. 43. 25. he makes open proclamation thereof; *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins*: so willing is God to free the sinner from mistaking the person, that he ingeminates the word, as if he had said, if thou art unacquainted who it is that must do away thy sins, know that it is I, I, who am thy maker, and put thee in a blessed condition whence thou fell ; and it is I who again will restore thee and send a pardon in the name of my Son and thy Jesus.

2 Mercy is exercised about him as his creature, to receive him into favour, not to punish him above measure, though he be out of measure sinful : Isa. 46. 9. *Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else, I am God, and there is none like me.* That God punishes sinful man, is the act of his justice ; that he is not severe in punishing, is an act of his mercy ; yea so loth he is to be cruel, that he would have his creatures put him in mind of his mercy , as if nothing so much delighted him as to have his servants to think and believe him to be merciful ; for so you read,

Put me in remembrance, let us plead together, declare thou that thou maiest be justified, Isa. 43. 29. wherein he that runs may read this sacred truth, that God is not alwaies extreme to mark what is done amiss, but is full of compassion. And this he doth

1. For his names sake, which in holy Moses stile is no other then the *Lord, the Lord, God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin*, Exod: 34. 6. And that the power of this glorious name may never fall, nor the remembrance thereof fail in the hearts of the sons of men, he will still go on to make his merciful name in much glory, in much majesty to pass before them; *for all the waies of the Lord are mercy and truth*, Ps. 26. 10. For though many sorrowes shall be to the wicked, yet he that trusteth in the Lord mercy shall compass him about. Ps. 32. 10. He is onely the God that heareth, and can answer prayer, therefore to him must all flesh come: it is his glorious name alone which is as an oyntment poured out, the excellency of whose savour perfumes the hearts of all that love him; *whose very goings rejoice the morning and evening seasons*. Other names and titles may give us free passage among the sons of men, and get or lose their favour; but it is onely the name *Iehovah*, who

who is mighty to save, that can give us a name to live when dead in sin; whose goodness crownes not onely the years, but the hearts of his people with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And so I pass to the second ground of mercy.

Ps. 60.11.

2. For his natures sake, whose very property is to have mercy; therefore when God in mercy spares his people from demerited wrath, he compares himself to a father, vailing his compassion under that tender relation; but when justice can no longer spare but by being injurious to its honour, by the provocation of our sins calling for vengeance to be poured upon our persons, then he represents himself *like a woman big with pain, and travailing with grief* (if I may so speak) to bring forth that just ire he hath been long in conceiving.

Yea mercy appears and is seen in hell it self, because though he punish to extremity of time, yet not to a fulness of horror, in intension of torment; whereas justice, like the harlots, will have the sinner divided soul from body, to be different sharers in eternal misery. Let thy lawes (O Lord) be writ in bloody characters upon the sinners head, is justices language, that so he may eternally wound the hairy scalp of him *that hath wilfully gone astray*: but mercy, like the true mother, continually cries,

spare the child (Lord) and save the sinner from eternal woe ; and at length this mournful voice proves effectual in the ears of Heaven, and with *Jacob*, obtaines the blessing ; for indeed mercy is the true mother of our lives, which else had long since been a sacrifice for our sins , had not the *scape-goat carried them away into the land of forgetfulness*, and by becoming a victim for the same , buried all our transgressions in his grave, that so they may never be able to rise in judgement , either against our persons or our services ; whose very nature it is to become an advocate for rebels, and like an affectionate surety pay the debt, that so the debtor may go free : and this he doth, not for our righteousness, or any merit that is to be found in us or our performances, but for his name and natures sake. And so I pass to the third ground of mercy, namely

3. For his glories sake.

For his glory, 1. In general.

2. In particular.

First, for his glory in general, that being the utmost my limited time and your patience will give leave to discuss, reserving the more particular parts , together with the dispatch of the two last doctrines, to our second part of this discourse : but I say

1. Generally, and in that I shall onely
but

but point you to those excellent graces wherewith he is pleased to furnish the hearts of the sons of men, that thereby they may become *vessels fit for the masters service*. God is delighted with shewing compassion; and mercy is so joyned to his nature, that he would have it wrought in, as well as bestowed upon us, that in this glorious attribute we may again bear his heavenly image: to that end sometimes our trials are made the subject for his love to work on; at other times he presents others misery as the opportunity for our mercy; and therein he calls out our faith, to believe that he who hath inclined our hearts to pity others, will shew abundant compassion to us; our hope, that God will deal no worse with our soules then he hath commanded us to use the soul of our brother; and lastly, he calls our charity to exercise its benevolence, knowing that besides the hundred-fold which in this life we shall receive for one drop of cold water bestowed in his name, and given for his sake, we shall receive in the life to come a crown of righteousness which shall never be taken from us; *for his mercy is over all his works, else should we be soon consumed:* which made holy Job cry out, *Remember I beseech thee that thou hast made me as the clay, and wilt thou bring me unto dust again?* Job 10.9. and again Job 7. 17, 20. *What*

is

is man that thou shouldest magnifie him, and that thou shouldest set thy heart upon him? I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee. O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee? &c. Once for all, take it in the 14. chap. 2. vers. and so on, *Man cometh out like a flower, and is cut down, he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not; and doest thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgement with thee? as a leaf also is he blown away with every wind: so is our soul tossed with various temptations, sometimes with the east wind of presumption, on the contrary, with the west of despair; now hurried with the north of rage, by and by carried away with the southwind of lust: thus like a tennis-ball is poor man racketed from one temptation to another, till at last he hazard eternal ruin; reeling from one extreme to another until he fall into perpetual misery.*

Therefore to conclude, let me implore every soul that expects and looks for eternal life, (as who doth not?) to get cleansed from all your iniquities, whether secret or open, latent or revealed, before you come unto the brink of misery from whence is no return; before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains wherein is no security: let no iniquity ever have any more dominion over you, get all your actions salted with true grace, that God may

may smell a sweet favour in your holy de-
votions and pious services, knowing that
your best performances are but gilded ap-
pearances, and glittering abominations, if
God should with severity inspect them :
so that we must all say with holy David in
the words of my Text, *If then Lord shouldest
be extreme, &c.*

FINIS.



SERM. III.

LUKE 2.7.

And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swadling-clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the Inne.

Introduction.

God is a most pure Act, never was he idle, but alwaies in being, even when this world was not in being; he was in himselfe love, and nigh enough to himselfe; yet when he was so, he thought of some eminent act of bounty wherein to produce an Idea of his goodness, and accordingly wills thoughts to himselfe of shewing mercy to mankind; for yet he would do good to all: therefore all his wayes are good, his being and well-being envied as yet by none, no not by Satan, the first parent of malice, and grand enemy both of Gods unspeakable glory and mans eternal

eternal felicity, not enduring to entertain the least thought of seeing humane nature deified; yet God, to shew the freedome of his love, in rich mercy stamps his own Image upon man, for it was his goodness as well as his power that he made us good as well as men; but what was at first made good we soon made sin, *for God made man upright, but he hath sought out many inventions*: so that had not God redeemed us, we had been miserable to all eternity; much rather had our souls not been, then not be happy. When man was made holy, and had sinned, though such iniquity deserved the ruine of what he was before, having defaced that image, yet God is prone to mercy when provoked: goodness would rescue that part of himself from ruine; for scarce one had sinned, but one was promised to save, the Son of God was promised and presented to the Patriarchs, being revealed to them by his promises, and foretold by his Prophets, that God would send his Son; he saw a fit vessel wherein he would inclose his son (*viz.* the Blessed Virgin) and therefore he sends his Angel to provide a lodging, telling her *that she was highly honoured of God, and she shall conceive in her womb, and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Iesus; that God would give him a name above every name, and of his kingdom there shall be no end:*

she

Luke 7.3.

she examined, and believed the Angels Message, and *and was found with child of the holy Ghost*, Luke 1. *the power of the highest over-shadowing her.* But loe she is summoned to another travel, for there is a decree from *Augustus Cesar*, and behold she takes no small pains to obey; for though her appearance might have been excused, yet she would not disobey the lawful magistrates command, the custome of women is on *Mary*; but alas, desolate Virgin, she is driven to that pass, that having no room in the inre, necessity compels her to make a chamber of the stable, and to turne the manger, (the place wherein is laid the food of beasts,) into a Cradle, the now onely receptacle for the bread of life, and at once both mother and mid-wife; for *she brought forth her first-borne son, and wrapt him in swadling-clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the Inne.*

In which words consider with me these four general parts.

- 1 A Virgins travail.
- 2 A mothers tenderness.
- 3 A childs poverty.
- 4 The peoples inhospitality.

1 A Virgins travail: *She brought forth her first-borne sonne.*

2 A mothers tenderness: *She wrapped him in swadling-clothes.*

3 A child's poverty: *laid in a manger.*

4 The peoples inhospitality: *There was no roome in the Inne.*

I begin with the first.

1. The virgins travail: *she brought forth her first-born son.* Wherein consider

1. The person, *she.*

2. The birth, *brought forth.*

3. The fruit, *her first-born child.*

1. For the woman, she was a virgin, but what, a virgin to bear, to bring forth a son? a wonder; and she her self cryes out, *I know not a man;* well might the Prophet *Ierem.* say, *Behold a Virgin:* and the Prophet *Isai.* likewise, yet she is the same, *Isa.* the 7. 14. vers. but that Christ was conceived of the holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, is an article of our faith, not of our understanding; best known is the manner to him that hath the power; virgins are not usually pregnant, yet the spirit engenders flesh, we take it not from his nature but power; the Holy Ghost produces the man Christ not of himself, but by his power: Christ begotten of himself as one with the Father, sending him on the great errand of man's salvation; for all the three Persons in the sacred Trinity have a share in this great work, the Father begetting, the Son begotten, and the Holy Ghost produced him at the fulness of time: I call the Holy Ghost Father, as his shadow; the virgin his

mother as his substance , or the matter of his person, whereby he is called the son of man, that by this means he might be joined to our nature , and so become surety for us:as for example we christians *are born of water & of the spirit*, & are not called the sons of water, but of the spirit , because by the spirit we are made one with Christ, and are thereby become the sons of God , that Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost and of *Mary* is most certain , but for our sakes called the son of *Mary*, and not of the Holy Ghost, yet hath the son an equality with the spirit , and is perfect God as well as man, therefore is it that the Holy Ghost concurs with *Mary* in the conception, both agree to make Christ, but not one way; for tis his the shadow , hers the substance ; hers the carcase , his the quintessence : how could it be but a *holy thing* , being of the Holy Ghost? though she had sin, yet Christ took none from her, because he would expell it from her; for had Christ been born of an Harlot , of *Mary Magdalen* , yet she could not have contaminated his integrity, but commended his power and mercy ; he could have sanctified the most sinful person and unhallowed womb.

Being conceived of the holy Ghost , he took our flesh, but not our corruption ; can the sun shine untainted on the dunghill ?
much

much more can the *sun of righteousness* appear in our clay without contagion; can we suspect a deity to receive a contagion from humanity? *for he was born of a Virgin, &c.*

Though a Virgin, yet espoused to a man, that Christ might be *Josephs* supposed son, and *Joseph* be Christ's supposed father; he chose one that was a Virgin, that the Jewes might see their prophesie fulfilled in him, the true Messiah; and that they should not suppose him the son of an Harlot, he was born of an espoused virgin, that marriage might be honourable to all; *for a virgin shall conceive &c.* And thus, the Church bears us as chaste virgins to Christ the espoused head. There was no need of the Elders of the City to judge of her purity, for she was no Harlot, but one under espousals, and yet not a wife, but a virgin, *for as yet she had not known man*, St. Luk. 1. 34. Mary brought forth Christ, *for she brought forth*; which brings me to the second thing.

2. The birth, *she brought forth*; when the fulness of time was brought to the period, he that made time was in time, he that created the world came into the world, he that brought forth his mother was born of his mother: the Angels wonder at the incarnation, every good spirit groans to see this glorious wonder brought forth; now or never *truth flourishes out of*

Esa. 7.19.

2 Cor.
11. 2.

22. Deut.
15.

the earth, and righteousness out of the womb of the mother : he that stept from heaven into the womb, stept into the earth out of the womb ; he that at the first creation made man without a mother would not now make God-man without a mother; the Creator makes use sometimes of a creature to produce his omnipotency, and who cannot admire such purity, virginity, in such pregnancy? that the fruit of her body should ripen, and yet a virgin, a maiden bringing forth what was not begotten, but made, and yet not created, but begotten; well might it be a virgin in whom it was made, and a God by whom it was begotten. Add to this, that the begetting not the birth dishonours the party among men, whose conceptions are in sin; but here the begetting brings honour to the party both in the conception and birth, because begotten from above: the flesh of man is not of man, but of the mother, and the flesh of Christ God-man, is not of man, but a virgin, that none should dispute his humanity; and yet begotten not by man, but of the Spirit, that none might question his Deity. Therefore let us not dispute how begotten of a virgin, considering his power; for I cannot believe him man without a mother, and I cannot believe him God if I do not believe his virgin-mother. The virgin did breed by her own, but unusual

way of conception; if we believe not the Father begets him without the help of the wise, we shall not believe he was born of a mother without the help of a husband; *she was a virgin, and brought forth her first-born son*, which brings me to the third particular.

3. The fruit, *her first-born son*; her first-born, because none before; not that she had any after, but as it is first-born of many brethren, not by nature but adoption, so the first-born of his mother, and the first-be-gotten of his Father; and all, that the begotten of men might become the sons of God; that we cannot boast as we are natural, but as made the adopted sons of God. It was once the saying of an Heathen Philosopher, *that he thanked God because he had made him a man, and not a beast; because he was made man, and not a woman.* Indeed nature did make man above the woman, but grace preferr'd the woman: it is our honour and happiness that God hath made and saved us by himself; it made the holy virgin say, *I will sing and rejoice in God my Saviour*, and yet her son, a son in several natures, a son equal with God, and like to his mother; so truly God as ever, as truly man as now he began to be; God before all time, and man in time; a son he was, yet motherless, because begotten, and not born; a man and fatherless; be-

because borne and not begotten. One denies that he is God, another denies that he is man; one will have him man indeed, but God apparent; another will have him God, but man in shew; one calls him meer man, yet deified; another a meer God, but carnal, one the word transubstantiate to flesh; another spirit in the likeness and similitude of flesh. O the blindness of men! because they conceive him not to be as he is, they will have him to be as they imagine. But we shall take the wary Christians way, that will not utter any thing besides the worth of his humanity, besides his divinity; and they will confess him as truly man as God, for he was born of the Virgin *Mary*; *she brought forth her first-borne son*. From hence learn

Use.

1. Our nature dignified.
2. Our Saviour humbled.

1. Our nature dignified; what an honor is it to be dignified above the Angels, and the natural Son of God thus becoming the son of man? Our nature though it be base by degeneration, yet it is noble by his regeneration; he dignified us with his nature: *as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God*: Though many stand upon their blood, as if true nobleness consisted in that which is

is derived from man to man ; but all is fetcht from Christ ; and, *not my blood, but Christianity makes me noble*, said that worthy Emperour Constantine : here is comfort that God is not ashamed to call us brethren ; and that 2 wayes.

1 By right of propriety ; so we have interest in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

2 Of neerness, and that in relation to Christ, for he is of kin to us ; *for they that are sanctified and he that sanctifieth are all one* : Christ is both our father and brother, our father as God, our brother as man ; and what an honour and comfort is it to us to be brethren unto the son of God ? that we that have the earth for our mother should have the God of heaven for our father ? and will he deny us any thing that hath given himself to be our father, and his son to be our brother ? he that hath given us Christ he will not deny us any thing ; he that hath given marks to redeeme us will he not crown us ? shall we doubt to receive any good from him , in regard Christ is our brother, in that he took our nature upon him ? for he was born of the Virgin Mary ; *for she brought forth her first-born son*. And why should we then debase our selves to lusts, and give our selves to unworthy lovers, the lusts of the flesh, the vanities of the world, or *Satans temptations* ? *we are made heirs of God, and coheirs*

with Christ, let us walk as the children of the light, as the redeemed ones of God, and such as Christ will own to be his brethren.

2 Christ humbled; what a wondrous abasement was this of Christ, that he that enjoyed the height of Divinity, should yet be the lowest of our nature ? that the Word should be incarnate, should be borne ? that the great God should become a child ? that the *Ancient of dayes* should become an infant of one day ? that the Almighty *Iehovah* should become the weakest of men, yea even as a child ? that glory should be so humbled that God should become man ? this is the wonder of wonders, a miracle placed upon pinnacle of admiration that he whom the *Heaven of Heavens cannot contain* should be laid in a manger : The inhabitants of the earth wonder to see a new star, much more to see a new sun on earth ; he was accounted, yea was, equal with God, yet made himself of no account in taking our forme ; he made himself like to us by a willing humiliation. It was the saying of a Father, *Whether can be most, to pity him that he was so, or admire him that he would be so?* that he would so descend to come in person, was a wonder, but that he should come in the wants and weaknesses of a child, that might have come in the glory of God, is above all wonder : and we

we are not more beholden to him that he came, then that he should so come ; he must be nothing that would be made like us ; *he made himself of no reputation*, not of his declining power, but of his inclining mercy : it was the goodness of God that he would not be glorious, rather then not profitable, and therefore the more and greater was his humility in debasing himself to us, the more should we magnifie him : not any thing of his, but ours was the unworthiness : And if our Saviour humbled himself thus, are not we yet humbled ? our thoughts cannot be too meanly conceited of our selves, since our Saviour was so low and vile ; the very heathen cannot debase us so low as the earth did God, who likened himself to us : let us compare our selves to nothing ; he was called the son of man born of a pure Virgin ; what should we call our selves ? *worms and no men, and say to corruption, thou art my mother*, since Christ was thus borne ; *for she brought forth her first-borne son*. And so I come to the second general, the mothers tenderness.

2 The mothers tenderness ; *she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swadling-clothes*. She wrapped him ; that custome was the office of a midwife, the visitation of friends and kindred ; among those many women in *Bethlehem*, was there

there no tender mother to afford *Mary* the office of common civility? none to consider the wants of a necessitous Virgin? among the many that gave to *Cæsar* was there none to give to *God the things of God*? Never was heavenly majesty invested in so homely a throne; Christ was now first borne, that we might be borne again; he became an infant in us that we might become men in him; he was now straitened to a span of mortality, that we might be enlarged to immortality; his mother now embraces him in her arms; she laps him not in a fine mantle, for what cares he to be gorgeous that cares not to be glorious? his rags they were pure & clean, though poor and mean; so soon as we had sinned we could be clothed; but so soon as he was borne he began to be miserable, he was wrapt in swaddling-clothes; Christ was wrapt in our clothes, to procure a blessing for us: though God made us naked and innocent, yet we presently made our selves nocent, and we had not been clothed, had we not blushed; what was there in Christ that he should be clothed, and thus clothed? surely no unrighteousness of his procured it but Christ was covered with these, onely for our sakes, whose sinful nakedness wanted the covering of his righteousness. O the vanity of men much more of Christians! Christ took our clothed

clothes to take our sins, yet we see not our sinnes in the vanity of our clothes; we accounted it our ornament to be clothed, and yet so full of poverty and indigency in our selves that all we have is either from the earth, or from the beasts that inhabit therein; it was sinne that brought us to borrow of the earth and beasts; it was sinne that made us thus shamefully clothed, to clothe our sinnes; and why should we be proud in the gaiest clothing, since it is but a remembrance of sinne? why should we trim and deck our selves, when Christ coming to save us, was wrapped in swaddling-clothes? Necessity of clothes speaks us men and the decency of them speaks us Christians; Christ was wrapt in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger. And so I come to the Childs poverty, *viz.*

3 *She laid him in a manger.*

God brought forth man like a King, and placed him in Paradise, but he brought forth God-man like a beast, in a stable, and laid him in a manger; Christ was abased as to a beast, left all honour as to understanding, that he might restore them to spiritual wisdome who by sinne were become like the beasts that perish. Christ came to restore man, and therefore would become one with the lowest of men, that none might come short of salvation. O silly creature, know thy master, the Lord of honour is now

the

companion of beasts ; obey him then in his humiliation, that hath disobeyed him in his glory ; what can we behold in this his abridgment, but the contemning of the pride and the glory of the world in his sanctified humility? why should Christ be thus low and mean, but to teach us to prize nothing but heavenly things ?

To Apply this.

If our Saviour did so humble himself to this mean condition, how low should we humble our selves before him? did the Son of God abase himself to misery and death, that he might exalt us to glory and life? therefore why are you lifted up? While Christ was vile thou wert raised up; though Christ was patient, thou art full of impatient malice; he embraces where thou despisest; thou likest not the taste of delicacies, yet he sucked a poor womans breasts ; thou grudgeth thy finest apparel, he contented to be in clouts, he was (though a King, though a God) borne in a stable, laid in a manger; to teach thee, that where thou art, thou should have nothing to regard or be proud of either in thy self, or thine enjoyments. For what was there about thee O blessed Jesus, but poverty was visible in it? a poor carpenter, and a desolate Virgin; and perhaps the beasts were thy onely companions: what was magnificent there but that

that which was noysome, and by the presence of Christ was made pure? a dark dungeon by this bright sun becomes full of light; the rags that wrapped him were more precions then rayment of purple, the clouts that comforted him were of more value then if made of the finest and most gorgeous linen. O Lord, our hearts are by reason of sin become dens, caves, and stables of uncleanness, oh that thou wouldest sanctifie and beautifie them by thy glorious presence! they cannot be happy or blessed one minute without thee, yet shall be as thou art, if thou comest but into them: but alas! we are many of us, as the *Bethlemites* that would not entertain Christ in the inne; *for there was no room for them in the inne.* Which brings me to the 4 thing, *viz.* the peoples inhospitality.

4 *There was no room for them in the Inne.* What? was the suddenness of the journey any cause of the virgins speedy travail, or her sudden travail rather a cause of the *Bethlehemites* uncharitableness? poor virgin, and yet happy mother of so blest a babe, she comes too late to be lodged in the Inne, that came too soon to be entertained of her kindred; but too late for the Inne, and all the room was taken up before she came, and therefore must be in the stable: rather then an honest traveller will be burthensome, the meanest

meanest room to his humility shall be great satisfaction: indeed some had their delicates, and fed onely for wantonness, though she wants necessaries; the Carpenter that had built many a house, now wants a house wherein to rest himself and almost wearied traveller; contentedly accepting the beasts for his companions rather then want a lodging: just so the God of heaven and earth having left heaven, was glad to shrowd himself in this clay of ours; *Joseph* came to his City, and the Citizens received him not, because they knew not that the Lord of glory was with him; thus *the Ox* knows his owner, and the *Asse* his masters crib, but Israel did not know, the Bethlemites did not consider, Esay 1. 3. Whom have you rejected you Bethlemites? Will ye rather reject God in a stranger, then entertain a stranger for Gods sake? What, do you throw God into a stable? Know you not that out of you shall come the ruler of Israel? Mich. 5. 2. And are you so stupidly ignorant, that now you will lose the accomplishment of that promise? How unlike art thou to *Bethlehem*, the house of Bread; in regard thou neither affordest him house to harbour, nor bread to succour him? But alas! woe unto us, we censure thee O *Bethlehem*, but if we had lived in thy dayes we should have been worse; and now can expect nothing but

but that *Bethlehem* should rise up in Judgment against us, for in this she is more righteous then we; for Christ came but once to them, and in humility, but he comes often to us in power, and we regard not. How often doth he knock at the door of our hearts by his Word, and by his Spirit, yea and that *untill his head be filled with dew, and his locks with drops of the night?* but we will not entertain him. O! if those rude heaps have had *the dust of his feet shaken against them* for their inhospitaleness, how shall these hard hearts of ours that will not receive him *be ground to powder*, when that great *milstone* shall fall upon us for our hardness and impenitency? do not your hearts tremble to hear the sad doom? *I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not: therefore ye shall go into everlasting punishment*, S. Mat. 25. 43, 46. With what sadness of countenance shall we hear this woe denounced, and that by Christ himself? and certainly without repentance it will be our portion: how then should we pray, oh that our hearts were worthy the harbouring of so rare a guest! With what diligence and care should we sweep our houses, set open our doors, and make us in a readiness when we heard of some earthly monarch that were

coming

Matth. 21.
24.

coming to us? and thus we should by repentence and holy devotion prepare our hearts, that they may be meet Tabernacles for him, and labour to get all those graces his Spirit confers on those that love him; that so our Lord might not come before expected, nor passe by uninvited, but freely turn unto us, and dwell by Faith in us, that we may dwell in him by the same Spirit; that Christ dwelling in us here, we may dwell with him for ever here after, *In whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.*

A



A Funeral Sermon.

S E R M O N IV.

1 COR. 15. 19.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

There is a time to be born, and a time to die, saith Solomon, Eccles. 3. 2: *And the day of a mans death is better iwen the day of a mans birth, for he is born to misery and trouble, as the sparks flie out of the fire; but by death he is delivered out of the misery of this sinfull world, to enjoy true blisse and happinesse:* therefore, why should we hang down our heads like a bulrush, and afflict our souls? or rather, why should we not, were it not that we know that God

Isa. 61. 3.

will give as beauty for ashes, and the spirit of joy for the garment of heaviness; or give us the felicity of his chosen, and make us rejoice with the gladnesse of his people?

1 Cor. 15.

32.

or with S. Paul, *Why should I fight with beasts at Ephesus, or contend with unreasonable men?* Why should I subdue the beastly lusts of the flesh, or overcome sinfull corruptions, or rather, *not run to all excesse of riot*, were it not that after this life there is laid up a crown of glory, which God will give to them that love and serve him? Why should we arraign and judge our selves, for to bring these dayes to an end, were it not that upon this moment hangs eternity, which we shall be possessed of

1 Cor. 15.

54.

when death shall be swallowed up of victory, and mortality shall put on immortality? or why should we account all things loss and dung for the excellency of Christ, but that besides the hundred-fold which we shall receive here below, God will reckon us among his precious Jewels? Why should we not embrace liberty and freedom, rather then abide a furnace of trials, were there not the Son of God to comfort us, and a fiery Chariot whereby to escape the fire that never goeth out? And *who can dwell with everlasting burning, or who can abide with devouring fire?* Isa. 33. 14. Why should we not be discouraged at the death of friends, and with great despondency hang

Phil. 3. 8.

down

Mat 3.9.

down our heads in discomfort, when we see the lives of our relations are cut off, and with-all remember that we our selves must shortly turn to dust, were we not assured, that he who *out of stones can raise up children unto Abraham*, will from among these stones raise us again, and give us a crown of righteousness? And set this crown aside, well may the world think Christians the most miserable. Take away the hope of a better life; I say, take away the hope we have in Christ of a better life, and we are so, since we are miserable, and outwardly most miserable: *For if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

In which words be pleased to consider these two generall parts.

1. Our happiness infer'd.
2. Our misery suppos'd.

1. Our happiness infer'd, that in this life we have hope of another life; *If we have hope only in this life.*

2. Our misery suppos'd: Otherwise we are of all men most miserable.

In the former general consider with me these particulars;

1. The termination of this happiness, *We*.
2. The foundation of it, and that is *in Christ*.

3. There is the common term, where the one hath interest in the other, and that is *in Christ*, even *hope*, which is two-fold;

A Funeral Sermon.

1. In this life.

2. Not in this life only.

In the second general, there is our misery supposed; and therein consider two things.

1. The extension of it, *all men miserable.*

2. The intension of it, *we the most miserable.*

If we invert the order of the words, we may draw these Conclusions :

1. From the extension, *all men miserable;*

That all men are of themselves miserable.

2. From the intension, *we the most miserable;*

That Christians in this life, are outwardly most miserable. We are of all men most miserable.

3. From the subject, with the common term we may note;

That the misery of a Christian is taken away, by the hope in Christ.

4. We may observe from that, that he hath it not only in this life;

That a good Christian hath not only hope in this life, but in a better. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are, &c.

So that here are the two Vessels spoken of by the Prophet, *The first was marred, and another made in its stead.* here is the one Vessel of sorrow, the other of joy; or a miracle answerable to that in the Land of Cana, where water was turned into wine; the water

Jer. 18. 4.

John 2. 7, 8.

water of misery turned into wine of Consolation, to make glad our hearts : or here are as it were two affections strugling the one with the other, (like Jacob and Esau in the womb) Misery and Happiness ; this world being as the place assigned for their production, misery first comes forth, like Esau, red and all hairy : and after it Happiness comes like Jacob, and supplants it ; so in respect of the life hoped for, while we are here upon earth, happiness supplants misery, and gets the start of it ; though all men are miserable, and Christians in this life the most miserable, yet by the hope in this life which they have of the hope of the life to come ; the misery is taken away : *For if in this life only, &c.*

Gen. 39.
25,22.

I shal follow the parts of the Text according to the order I drew the Conclusions, and begin with the first of them : namely,

1. *That all men are of themselves miserable.*

1. Conclu-
sion.

That it is so, whose own experience doth not testifie it ? misery is an argument of our being, for whether you consider the objects, the Soul, or the Body, you must conclude with holy Job, that our souls are poured out of us ; or with the Prophet David, *The dayes of affliction have taken bold of us* ; for we have found, those very things wherein our happiness consisted, to have proved either broken reeds, or miserable comforters. For,

Job 30 16.

1.

1. We are at a losse at the happiness in the intellectuall man ; here our misery is ignorance ; or our unhappiness is that we are not absolute, or not fully restitute and restored.

2.

2. The whole body is yielding to distempers and troubles ; and that in the affections common or appropriate.

Common.

1. Common, and Here, all those qualities that conspire to the good of the whole yield to a generall distemper : Or,

Appropri-
a c.

2. Appropriate, and here man must fully joyn himself to misery, for there are severall kinds of misery, proportionable to his several degrees of knowledge, and that also to his several years or ages, as infancy, child-hood, youth, middle age, decaying age, old age ; and for which of these is there any Balm in *Gilead*, any releasement from all trouble ? For look

3.

3. On all those outward, now if not utterly past, yet far-spent dayes, in collection of which, all the good that is found therein what of it can satisfie an immortal soul, or comfort it ? Since he that had experience most of all doth conclude, that the chief *are no better then vanity, and the best vexation of spirit*, Eccles. 2. 11. We finde it by experience all men are miserable. The goodness of a thing rests in the content and permanency of it ; yet how short are all earthly things in their durance,

durance, yielding to change even while we enjoy them? as holy *David*, *I said in my prosperity I shall never be moved*. And holy *Job* said, *I shall die in my nest*. Yet holy *David* he found his thoughts deceived, which made him complain, *Thou didst turn away thy eyes, and I was troubled*; and holy *Job* experienced no lesse, *When I looked for peace, and quietness, then came trouble*. Such are the troubles of this life, though they seem like a river of oyl, smooth and pleasant, yet they prove like the waters of *Marah*, bitter; or like those of *Jericho*, salt and unsavory; or if they are delightfull, and at that present be what they seem, yet at last they prove a trouble; thus is man most miserable, and sometimes even in his best contents. But what means this? Can the goodnesse of God estrange it self? or is his mercy clean extinct? surely neither, he hath made nothing in vain: or can the God of nature, who made all things for the use of man, can he so far estrange himself in any thing, as to deny the participation of it to his image? no not in any wise. There was a time when piety and perfection were concentrick in the same person, when love and hatred dwelt not in the same tabernacle: there was a time when happiness was as perfect as mans innocence, when freedom from sin and punishment were equall: when heaven dwelt on earth, and did com-

Psal. 30.6.

Job 29.18.

Psal 30.7.

Job 30.26.

Exod. 15.

23.

municate the Image of God unto Man, vindicating him from misery ; man was not born in sorrow, nor had iniquity as yet dominion over him , felicity and blessedness being then the companions of his life ; as yet the days of affliction had not taken hold of us, or our sorrow overtaken us nor did it, till abominable man had drunk iniquity like water, which like a merciless deluge drowned every faculty both of soul, and body : Man was not miserable till man had ploughed iniquity, and sown wickedness, and then no wonder if sorrow springs out of the dust ; for now man is born to sorrow as the sparks fly upwards ; as will appear *à majore ad minorem, & à minore ad majorem.*

I. *A majore ad minorem*, from the greater to the lesser : Christ knew no sin , yet he was a man of sorrow ; the imputation of our sin, made him the heir of our sorrows. he being the Surety for man, he paid the debt when the Principal went free, which brought him to that pathetical exclamation, *Behold, if ever sorrow was like unto my sorrow.* Thus the Son of God for man became miserable, and not only did man by sin bring sorrow upon his Redeemer, but also upon himself and the whole creation too, as will appear.

2. *A minore ad majorem*, from the less to the greater : The creatures which were not capable of sin, but being subject to man

man, are made lyable to suffering; The creature is made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by constraint. Wherefore the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, &c. Rom. 8. 20, 22. How much more Man is become miserable, for whose sake the whole Creation became miserable? Misery is the common condition of this life; though grace raise the soul to a higher contemplation, which often mitigateth and easeth the bitterness of the trouble; yet notwithstanding it often cometh to pass that through the inequality of sufferings in this present life, she and all her followers must wear garments of a deeper black, than the rest of her sons: for if others have their cups filled up to the top with bitter afflictions, these filled with the dregs; if one be scourged with whips, the other with Scorpions; if they partake of common afflictions, good men must be most miserable: which brings me to the second conclusion;

2. *That Christians in this life are outwardly most miserable.*

2. Con.

Virtue hath such power over the soul of man, could it be seen, it is so pure, it would ravish the beholder with admiration, that it is strange how it comes to pass, though grace be but virtue sanctified, and raised to contemplation, that she that commends her better part, is so far from having that respect

respect due to her, that she is made the heir of sorrows, and wicked men like the unjust servants (in the Gospel) conspire her death and utter extirpation.

It is strange to see the Sun cursed for its heat, the most innocent to be least secure in this life, where they must expect sorrow and trouble: *For all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution: and that either inwardly, or outwardly:*

2 Tim. 3.

12.

Psal. 120 5.

2 Pet. 2. 7.

1 Cor. 4.

13.

Psal. 69.

12.

1. Inwardly, while the godly cry out with holy *David*, *Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell in Meseph, &c.* or with just *Lot* (while in *Sodom*) who complained that *his righteous soul was vexed with the unclean conversation of the wicked*, hearing the sacred Name of God blasphemed with oaths, and seeing the consent of ungodly men. And

2. Outwardly; and that either secret, or manifest.

1. Secret, witness the low esteem and base value the world rates Gods Jewels at; accounting them *the filth, and off scouring of the world.*

2. Manifest; and that in words, behaviour, or actions.

1. In words, thus *Tertullus* called *Saint Paul a babler, a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition*, Act. 24. 5. And *Abab* called *Elijah, him that troubled Israel*, 1 King. 18. 17.

2. In behaviour; and thus the drunks make songs of *David*; and even

Christ

Christ himself is derided ; the Jews mock him in his Prophetick Office, saying, Prophe-sie who smote thee, St. Mat. 26. 68.

The Souldiers mocked him in his Priest-ly Office, bowing their knees, and worshipped him, St. Mark. 15.19.

Herod mocked him in his Kingly Office, when he put a purple robe on him, and platted a crown of thorns on his head, and all in scorn to his sacred person, St. Mat. 27.29.

3. In actions; and here what mischiefs are not executed , while wicked mens heads are plotting against the Lords peculiar peo-ple ? Their foul suggestions create ways to disturb them , that we cannot conclude that *Homo est homini Deus*, that man is to man a God, unless we believe there are two Gods, a good and a bad ; what then ? *Est homo homini demon* , is man to man a devill ? not so good ; *That Kingdom that is divided against it self cannot stand*, saith our Saviour ; the Kingdom of Satan remains and stands, and therefore that Kingdom is not divided : how then ? *Est homo homini lupus* , is man to man a wolf ? not so good neither ; wolves prey not on wolves, the sa-vage wilde beasts do not devour & prey on their own kind : but what then ? *Homo est homini homo*, man is to man a man, and what creature doth man more mischief then man ? See the fire less cruel to the three Children , and the hungry Lions more merciful

Mark. 3.
24.

Dan.3.27.

Dan. 6.22.

merciful to Daniel then were their accusers; the earth more pities Abel in opening her mouth to receive his bloud, then was Cain his brother which slew him; and wherefore slew he him, but because his own works were evil, and his brothers righteous? 1 Joh. 3.12. So though at the very first you see man walking from the womb to the grave, giving up that breath he first drew into misery, yet here you have mischief more active, though the wicked shall substract from the number of the days of the godly, it is but to increase his miseries; and though they abbreviate the Text, it is he that comments upon it; yet here is the comfort, though in his way from Jericho unto Jerusalem he fall among theives, and they wound him, and leave him half dead, yet the pious Samaritan his Saviour, takes care of him, poureth in Wine, to make glad the heart, and Oyl, to make him cheerful, which are the true effects of a faithful soul in greatest miseries and extremities, which he receives by hope in Christ: For,

3. Con.

3. The misery of a Christian is taken away by the hope in Christ.

Yet mistake not, it is not for all trees to heal the bitterness of the waters of Marah, nor all meat to heal the deadly pottage; it is for every hope, out of the eater to bring forth meat: it is a riddle (a good Samson puts forth) of too sub-

Exod. 15.
25.

lime

lime a nature for carnality to unfold, it is a mystrey so divinely pleasant and delightful, that none can declare but they that plough with Christs heifer, *Judges 14. 18.* Indeed wicked men may presume, and by the help of their own abilities, think to find perfect freedom, *but their expectation shall fail, and their hope be cut off,* *Job 8. 14.* only those are they that receive comfort, that have the *God of Jacob* for their help. Now in what part of the soul Hope is seated, is disputable, it matters not whether or no it be referred to the Will, seeing it extends to the object he desires; and that hope is properly taken not to be a passion, but a habit infused by the Spirit of God into a Christian; which I take to be not the soul of a man, but the affections thereof; for faith that proceeds from hope, and hope that relies on righteousness, not that our unrighteousness can expect any thing from God, (this would include presumption, or merit) but by it we wait for the Righteousness of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is the object of our hope two ways.

1. Inclusively.

2. Exclusively.

1. Inclusively; and that two ways.

1. Including as the end, all the persons of the sacred Trinity; and
2. All the Attributes of God.

2. In

2. Including the less principal objects of our hope, the graces of the Holy Spirit, by which salvation is revealed to the soul.

1. Including as the end, all the persons of the sacred Trinity, for Christ is called the **Hope**, not of parts but of persons; all those acts of grace that are from God returned, are terminated in the **Essence** of the Sacred Trinity; as we believe in God, and we love God, and hope in God, without determining any person, or secluding any; though the soul look diversly, as in himself, and so loves God because he is the chief good; and faith unites the Soul to God, as the principle of good, & hope (the souls anchor) depends on his purity: though all seem diversly, yet they all meet in this God, therefore he is called *the God of hope*, Rom. 15.13. & Jer. 14.8. and that not as the efficient cause working this grace in our hearts only, but as the final cause to which it moves, expecting to enjoy the presence of God, which is the fulness of joy for evermore, Psal. 16.11.

2. Including all the Attributes of God; for these are they on which our hope takes hold: nay, they are his very being, which we may safely flie to, and that for any good we expect to receive from God, he having put them as the horns of the Altar; for hope analogically takes in all the attributes

butes of God, and is the Horns of that holy Altar which by grace is erected in the heart of every true believer; as holy David said, *God is his shield, his fortress and deliverer, yea and the Horn of his salvation also,* Psal. 18. 1. For you may in sacred Writ find pregnant examples of Gods Saints which have particularly committed themselves to his severall properties; as *Jacob* to his Truth, Gen. 32. the three Children to his Omnipotency, *Dan.* 3. 17. the two blind men to his Goodnesse, *St. Mat.* 20. 30. the father of the Lunatick to Christs Power, *St. Luke* 9. 38. the Leper to Christs Will, *St. Mark* 1. 4.

2. Including the lesse principall objects of our hope, by which salvation is declared to the Soul; so it flies to God with a three-fold hope, 1. With hope in the promises of Christ. 2. Of the Graces of Christ. 3. In the merits of Christ. First in the promises of Christ; for, *in him they are yea and amen,* 2 Cor. 1. 20. and these promises of Christ may be considered two manner of wayes:

1. Absolutely.

2 Conditionally.

1. Absolutely, as the promise of the Messias, *Isai.* 28. 16. Or,

2. Conditionally, and that Legally and Evangelically; 1. Legally as the promises which annex eternall life to the condition of perfect Obedience, which was

2.

Threefold
hope.

1.

at

at first made with *Adam* in a covenant of Works under the Law ; but here 2. Evangelically we have annexed Hope of entring Heaven, as our Fathers entred Paradise, and that to the Evangelical condition of Faith ; for it is a far greater priviledge to be brought like sons into the fathers house, only upon such conditions as we know are already performed by our Surety , and wants only the act of Faith to make them ours, then with a servile spirit continually to be enslaved to that bondage from which we can never free our selves, which is much more likely a beggerly receiving , then a working hand. But,

2. 2. Hope in the Graces of Christ, 1 Pet. 13. Hope, that's the grace that is offered to you and brought to you , for by grace ye are saved, Ephes. 2. 8. Nor doth this diminish any thing in Christ, when the object upon which our Anchor layes hold , is onely Christ Jesus our Lord ; for we can do nothing by our act of hope but only when grace is propounded as subordinate , and the means to the other ; we may fix both in Christ, the principal help to attain E-ternal Life ; it is Christ that can bring a Soul to that happiness he desires , and grace that is the instrument and agent to-wards attaining it.
3. 3. Hope in the Merits of Christ where-
by to attain Heaven; prayer is hope in-
terpretative

interpretative ; this hope is the root of prayer ; but the Merits of Christ is the ground ; we pray for what we hope , and hope what we pray for shall be granted through the Merits of Christ ; without this Faith would be desperateness , and hope presumption ; our prayers without the eye of faith would be but blind ; though we had this hand , we should but be weak without this staff of hope ; the merits of Christ would be but to us as unrighteousness : prayer is the Dove sent out of the Ark ; hope the wings that help her in her speedy flight , and both return empty except they come with a leaf from that branch that is pluckt from the merits of Christ ; faith is the hand of the soul , prayer the si- news , and hope the nerves that act in this conveyance ; but without the merit of Christ all will be but like a brandish'd weapon , clashing against the brazen pillars of our own created confidence ; this verily must be the support of our devotions , that we may pray for what we hope Christ hath merited , which consists in justification , sanctification , and glorification .

1. In hope of justification, *viz.* pardon of sin, remission and freedome from punishment.

2. Hope of grace, for sanctification, whether it be the inward favour of God, as the Apostles blessing, when he saith, *the*

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with them, or the habitual grace of Gods spirit, which is dayly given us, till we become perfect men, and the hope of glory answerable to glorification.

3. Hope in glorification, where we expect to be made happy in that estate, where shall be no intermissions of joy, or periods in our felicity; where faith shall triumph in vision, and hope in fruition, and that to all eternity. Thus Christ is the object of our hope inclusively.

2. Exclusively, Christ the object of hope, and that,

1. In respect of the creature.

2. In respect of our selves.

1. The creature: for what good is there in the creature without, or our selves within? *for do men gather grapes of thornes or figs on thistles?*

What folly were it for him, in the next danger of drowning, to catch hold of a twig, that might get to the rock or the shore, which might secure him? yet such is the folly of vain hope, that neglects the rock of salvation and trusts to the creature, that is but as a rush and a flag within the water.

2. Excluding what good there is in our selves, for though in regard of naturalls our wants are great, yet in regard of spiritualls they are much greater, we by our fall were cast out of the Paradise of Gods favour into the

the field of danger, where was nothing to move compassion but pollution in our own blood ; but when we were so, he passed by, and said *Live*, he washt us in the laver of regeneration , and made us comely by his imputative righteousness , and clothed us with sanctifying grace , and shall we now play the harlot, and bestow any thing upon another which belongs to him ? it is no other then dividing the living child with Christ , he will have none of our divided hope , or distrusting faith : where grace is feeble, the soul often hangs in suspence between hope & fear ; for had it but once convincst the soul of the object, he would not any longer trust to himself, which breeds distraction, which is but as a broken reed, but *he that trusts in me* (saith the Lord) *shal possess the land, & inherit my holy mountain*, Isa.

57.13. so that now we have found the rock of salvation on whom we may build without fearing to be removed, *though the winds blow and the tempests rise*, we shall but slight and scorne all their foaming rage ; the hope of future good will out-ballance all the present misery, this sustaining hope will either lessen the burthen of our miseries , or add to our strength to bear them ; so that although all helps may seem gone, no remedy but the ready miserable destruction of despairing ; though we cannot see when any good shall come , *Ier. 17. 6.* Yet all

these evills laid in the ballance of the Sanctuary are too light to stand in competition with the hope in Christ: nay every true hope is then most strong when most opposed ; every affliction is advantageous, making their hope more quick ; the fire proves more intense, when its laboured, to be extinguished by cold elements , such is the nature of this grace of hope, every affliction recovers her life and heat , which before were raked in the ashes; she gives wings to the souls flight, every blustering wind helps her in soaring upward ; here we have her got to the hill from whence she expects salvation , here we have her like Sampson carrying the gates of Gaza ; not onely helping a Christian to bear crosses with patience and resolution , so as she can sing in prison , but with the Angel to St. Peter, it opens the gates of the city, and *makes all work together for good to them that love God* ; so that the misery of a Christian is taken away by the hope which he hath in Christ , which hope brings me to the fourth conclusion.

That a good Christian hath not onely hope in this life , but in a better ; which hope is twofold.

1. The lower, in this life.
2. The upper, not in this life only :
For if in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable.

1. A Christian hath hope in Christ in this

life, though Heaven be the chief place of hope, yet earth is for the exercise of that hope, in this life is the proper time of getting it as being necessary for the whole, there it hopes for the manifestation of all the promises, and here nature gives leave in the journey to prepare for the land of safety; nor could a Christian bear up against the storms and billows that arise and molest him in his passage through this world, but for the hope of coming home to that place in Heaven which is prepared for him, and no other comfort in the danger of the way, but in coming to our countrey, where *we shall be absent from the body, but present with the Lord,* doth support them: *the Saints are Strangers and Pilgrims, and have here no abiding city;* thus did the Patriarchs cheerefully cast of all earthly comforts for the obtaining of the holy rest and glorious promises which by faith they saw afar off, and by hope enjoyed them, this hope serued them in the valley of teares to revive their strength, or like the hony on *Ionathans* rod, to open our eyes to behold our comfort, in the object of true delights which is Christ Jesus our Lord, for it is ordinary for every thing to desire its own content, as the rule in nature teaches; for the very plants will not be wanting to the creatures in things necessary to their being, so it is the rule of the God of nature,

to be wanting to his creatures in any thing that tends to their well being; witness the free Ordinary which the foules of the aire dayly feed on at Gods table; & if his goodness be extended to meaner creatures, shal it be straightned to you? or rather he that hath given you all things for this present, will he be wanting to you for the things that pertain to a future life? he hath given extraordinary deliverance in peril, rescued you from the power of thousands by despicable hands: it is true we cannot conclude the love of God from outward prosperity, they are not essential to make up happiness, but because of the promise of this life, we may waite for the manifestation of his goodness in these outward things; suppose God deny the lesser, and give us the greater, that he stop the springs below, that the springs above may run the faster; he makes them that are his children often to possess the sins of their youth, and the wicked that are prepared for destruction to take the wall while the heart of the godly are sunk down; what shal we say with holy David? *verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency;* Ps. 83: 13. verse, nothing less; for the best of our hope survives the worst of our sufferings; though when ye look on a Christian in the outside, you may see him miserable, but look upon him in the hope that he hath in

in Christ, and you see him secure, he is happy though that hope may be crost; for here is the comfort that a good Christian hath hope in Christ not in this life onely, and that in two things:

1. The lesse proper place for the exercise of the act of Hope.

2. The more principle Object of it.

1. The lesse proper place for the exercise of the act of Hope; for when the Soul departing from the Body shall come to her country, and be possessed of the fruition of God, which she panted after, she in her self doth not hope, because the things hoped for are present, and because of the special union of the Soul with Christ, yet still there is hope in Heaven, for the full manifestation of the promises: *For the Souls under the Altar cry, how long Lord, holy and true? &c.* Rev. 6. 9, 10. But that which the Souls in Heaven have simply, and in regard of the happiness they enjoy is not hope, *for hope that is seen is not hope;* for there it is not faith but vision, and not hope, but fruition; yet in some sense, they wait for the accomplishment of all the Divine promises: for the difference lies in these respects following:

1. That above it differs from that below in degrees of Excellency; that here below is grounded on Faith, which beholds the promises of God darkly, but

that above is grounded on a clear sight, and a perfect vision.

2. That hope below is attended with sighs and sadnesses, that above without sorrow, all sighing and sorrow being removed from their hearts, whose tears are wiped away with the light of Gods Countenance.

3. This below hath weaknesses and imperfections, but that above is a confirmed hope, thus our hope, even to the day of Judgement shall not be abolished in Heaven, in regard of Essence it remains, but in regard of weaknesses, it ceases. For till Gods promises be accomplished there, is yet hope in exercising that act, that may bring us to the enjoyment of the highest manifestation of Divine Love.

2. The more principall objects, not in this life onely, that is not onely for the things of this life, but the things of a better life; for though hope looking to God, it refers to the things of this life for subsistence, yet it chiefly respects the things of the other life, the resurrection of the flesh, &c. other hopes may promise eternal, but will but serve as figge leaves; other hopes may bring to the fruition of what we hope for, but cannot give satisfaction; but such is the excellency of this hope, as it will supply so much as faith can beleeve, or hope desire: so that, as it would

would be desperateness to cast away this anchor, so again madness to cast it off as needless: the Saints which should be climbing Heaven, it would be folly for them to ply this hope about this life, when we may have it about a better; to hope in this life onely is unchristian, and lesse then Christianity will not give us the hope of an eternal life: to follow Christ onely to get possession of outward comforts, is but to starve our souls while we feed our bodies with the loaves of pretended Sanctity; for he that will be Heir to Christ's Kingdome, must expect to be crown'd with thornes, temporal felicity having no entailment upon his discipleship, persecution being their portion, and their sufferings part of their triumph. So that each true Beleever must joyn in the Chorus, with the song of Saint Paul, pathetically exprest in the words of my Text:

If in this life onely we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

FINIS.

¶¶¶¶¶¶¶¶¶¶:¶¶¶¶¶¶¶¶¶¶

A
SERMON
ON
S^t. THOMAS Day.

SERMON V.

St. JOHN 18. 37.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth, &c.

Intro-
duction.

Envie and Malice, the inseparable companions of a vicious heart, are alwayes in unwearied motion untill they have found out some convenient means whereby to bring about their abominable ends; and rather then be disappointed

pointed of unhallowed thoughts, or wicked words, they will not cease to speak evil of the way of truth ; yea (by them) those are accounted enemies that speak the truth : thus wicked *Ahab* salutes the Prophet *Elijah*, *Have I found thee O my enemy?* 1 Kings 21.20. So that it seemes he accounted that holy person no lesse then his souls adversary for telling the truth ; so persecuted they the Prophets of old ; and the malice of men and devils have been so persecuting in all ages, that the Church hath not found where to rest, for the Saints wandred up and down afflited and tormented ; yea, *they wandred about* (saith the Apostle) *in sheeps-skins and goats-skins, &c. of whom the world was not worthy*, Heb. 11.38. And in this the Disciple was not before, or above his Lord, for no better entertainment had Christ himself ; and he is pleased to say, *To this was I born, & for this cause came I into the world, &c.*

Which words have a double aspect, and *Ianus*-like appear with a double face, the one looking upon Christ, the other upon Christians ; the one concerns our Saviour, the other respects our selves : For,

1. If you respect the day, so they look at Christ, not onely as this is the Lords Day, but as it is the *Advent-Sunday*,

in-

instituted for the Advent, or coming of Christ in the Flesh.

2. It looks upon Christ as coming in his Ordinances and administrations to his people.

3. It looks upon his coming in gracious visitations, as on this day by his power coming to deliver the Church Militant from sinne and misery to be a Church triumphant in glory ; and thus my Text hath reference to the several comings of Christ. But that's not all ; the words not onely concern Christ, but they have reference unto Christians also, and that in a three-fold respect ; for they eye all the errours and mislookings of the times.

1. They look upon the grosse opinions of those that say the Scepter of Christ, and the power of earthly Kings stand in opposition one to another, and thereupon cry down all rule and all authority, saying like the heathen, *Let us break their bands in funder, &c.* Psal. 2. 3. It is true, Christ had the Title of a King, yet neither that, nor himself made any impeachment of *Cæsars Lawes* ; and though he denied not himself to be a King, yet he refused to dethrone *Cæsar* ; for he saith expressly, *my Kingdome is not of this world* : So then, you see he is not in opposition to the Kings of the earth, he came not to take away earthly Kingdomes, but to give

an

an Heavenly Kingdome ; and therefore he saith, *Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsars, &c.* We must obey the temporal Lord for his sake who is the Heavenly Lord, for they who yeild not obedience to temporal Kings for Christs sake, (who hath commanded it) have as yet made no glorious entrance into the Kingdome of Heaven ; for love to Christ, and submission to *Cæsar* may and do dwell together in the same heart.

2. The words look upon mens works as they are Christians, who in defence of lawful Superiours with their swords in their hands, had rather die fighting, then betray their liberty by a cowardly resignation of their lives and fortunes ; and also as Christians they have learnt of Christ their Head, to pay Tribute where lawfully it is demanded ; for if any might have rebelled, and refused the same, none more lawful and able then our Saviour, who could at his pleasure *command more then twelve legions of Angels* to assist him, and could command all the treasures of the earth as King and Lord thereof ; yet refused the glory of the one to pay lawful tribute, and the innumerable force of the other, that with silence he might answer *Cæsars Deputy*, for he came to bear witness of the truth ; and he will rather lose his life then his obedience.

3. That

3. That none that would be thought a Christian, might think himself unconcerned, the words look upon all men, but especially upon those that in pretended religious, yet persecuting times, are ready to betray the truth, rather then stand against all the opposition that arises from men and Devils ; for why should not Christians be as ready to defend truth, as others are to oppose it? Christ Jesus, the Captain of our Salvation hath led us the way ; for when all conspired against him because he spake the truth, yet was he with his life ready to justifie the truth, saying, *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, &c.*

In which words consider these two general parts :

1. An Engagement.

2. A Designe.

1. An Engagement ; *he was born, he came into the world.*

2. A Designe ; *to bear witness to the truth.*

But since the end and the Object denominate every action, here is

1. The action ; *Christ's incarnation.*

2. The end ; *to bear witness.*

3. The Object, *the truth ; to bear witness to the truth.*

Or if you will, take them in this order :

1. The

1. The end, and that pointed at, and pointed out.
 1. Pointed at; *for this cause, and to this end.*
 2. Pointed out; *by being born and brought into the world.*
2. The action; *to bear witness.*
3. The Object, the truth; *to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, &c.*

But since the end is first in intention, though last in execution, I shall begin at the end, yet the right end, and that pointed at; *for this cause, and to this end came I into the world, &c.*

The lives of most men are mispent only for want of a certain end to run at, because they shoot their arrowes, and know not at what mark they levell, and direct their proceeding by they know not what rule; therefore it is that they reach not to perfection, and end not in comfort. Some levell at the right end, but levell amiss: To levell without an end were folly, to a false end, were losse; true Christians onely finde the right way, for a wise Christian amidst the many changes of this mortal life, still presses on to one steddy end by holy endeavours; for the more he is unshaken in his resolutions, the nearer he cometh to the great exemplar of life, Christ Jesus, who stood firm unto the end,

end, and continued stedfast in the truth, witnessing the same with the losse of his most precious life, as himself affirmes; *To this end was I borne, &c.*

It would be both needless and unprofitable for me to undertake the calculation of our Saviours Nativity, or to make a discovery unto you of those signes which did accompany it in a most miraculous manner, or to tell you the wonderful effects thereof set down in the Gospel; which though they were above the ordinary course of nature, yet you must know, that those Celestial constellations did not contribute any thing to the producing of that glorious Birth, but only in an admirable and unusual manner were made to bear witness unto this great truth that is in my Text said to be born, that he also may give testimony to the truth. Indeed there is a no lesse impious then foolish Proverb taken up by men in the world, upon the event of any action or thing, to lay the cause thereof upon the Stars and Planetary influences; and thereby men think, when guilty, to excuse themselves, saying, a fatal necessity brought it upon me, or they were compelled to it, saying irreligiously, I was born to this, or the Stars designed me to it; as if some extrinsecall necessity did draw men to sinne, as if the Stars were the causes of mens iniquity; yet

yet of the two those are better (thongh justly to be condemned also) that would excuse themselves by laying the fault upon the influence of malignant Planets, or their own corrupt nature, then those that inferre the cause from a necessity in the peremptory decree of Almighty God, as if Holiness it self should take pleasure in making men criminal. Such a principle imbibed, is enough to bring a man to that opinion of the *Stoicks* at least ; if not to think that there is a good and an evil God, yet that the one Almighty Essence acts as if he were divided, by saying, though God would have men otherwise then they are, yet he hath decreed a certain end of misery to the greatest part of men, without any respect of good or evil in their persons ; and so make the evil actions of men determined by Gods Decree : and what will this come short of them that attribute the good actions of men to a good God, and their evil actions to an evil God ? Yet those *Stoicks* that make two Gods, and these Planetists that lay the fault of their actions upon the Stars, are much better then those that say all things are absolutely necessary, and that all their ends are undeterminable by any actions of men whether good or evil ; it will be better to raise the evil accidents from an evil then from a good God.

But that we are under a fatal decree of necessity as to event, or that we were born to commit this or the other evil, we utterly deny; and that,

I. First, by considering the evil consequences that will follow upon asserting a peremptory decree; for if Gods peremptory decree hath designed sin to come into the world, then men sinne not in deed, but in opinion onely; necessity hath no law, and where necessity bears sway, there the will hath no power, and so man becomes equal with the beasts of the field, with the Lion, whose unbridled appetite cannot be restrained by the rigor of the severest law; and the reason is, because they cannot upon admonition do otherwise, they cannot use principles of reason; and therefore is it that mad men and children are under no law, because not capable of rational actions, for no man is commanded to do those things necessity requires; as for example, no man is bidden to eat, drink, and sleep, because these actions, and affections are necessary for the preservation of life; the will may govern, but not suppress them: indeed charity is of necessity; whether it be considered as a free principle within, or without; and we are careless of those things that are without, if necessity have no law; for if actions in themfelvs have no law, then they are not sinful, for where no transgression of the law

law is, there can be no sin, & if all things be ruled by destiny, then they are of necessity, and so by consequence our actions are neither good nor bad in themselves, but onely are good or evil, as esteemed by us, and in our opinion; and if it be so, then to what purpose was the Son of God made man, and so became a sacrifice for sin ? to what end are exhortations, and means used to hinder men from sin, if they are but fancies? a Christians calling and Christs dying are meer fables, if sin be not sin ; if sin be nothing, it matters not, let men live how they list ; and whither tends this principle, but to the subversion of all religion? when a man layes the ground of all his actions upon the peremptory decree of Almighty God.

2. Consider, this belief clearely takes away a mans conscience ; for why should men strive to hinder sin, or make conscience of what they do, when they are perswaded there is a necessity of sinning lies upon them ? and why should a man weep and mourn for that evil for which there is a necessity he do commit it ? as it must needs be, when a mans sins are his destiny, and not any thing in himself the cause thereof: therefore if it be so, if sin be not at all ours, but of destiny, or upon an inevitable decree, then all our teares and repentence are spent in vain : and when once

this principle is thoroughly entertained, religion cannot long continue, therefore how cautious should we be of harbouring such principles? much better were it for us to reflect upon our selves as the onely cause and instruments of sin; and be alwaies afraid lest Gods just punishments should unavoidably overtake our evil actions; and in this moderate sense feare makes a man apprehensive of a Deity, alwaies unwilling to offend him, and ever careful to keep a good conscience, which the contrary opinion will lead a man to destroy.

3. It takes away the guilt of sin; for whatsoever is fatal, cannot be justly punished, because those sins for which men are justly rewarded with punishment, must be concluded to have been within their power to have avoided them; but fatal actions are not so, neither can any man be temporally or eternally punished for those actions which he was born to commit; for, for a temporary offence which a man could no way avoid, no eternal punishment can justly be inflicted, the imbecillity of his power justly repriming him from the sentence of condemnation; and as no eternal, so no temporary judgement can belong unto them, for if magistrates thought mens offences unavoidable, they would think it bootless to punish them; but we see Judges punish men for offences, because they know men have

have a power to refrain from breaking the law, having dayly experience, that fear of punishment hath kept men inoffensive: but on the other side, if the offender should think the offence for which he stands convicted to have been his destiny, whether it be murder, rebellion or acts of treason, and other villanies, &c. and that they were committed by the necessity of a decree, and that to this end he was born, then he would and might very well plead innocence, and complain he was unjustly punished for that which he had no power to refuse, so that you see such a principle as this, will be the dissolution of all government both temporal and spiritual; for how can it stand with the justice of God to punish man, yea to destroy to eternity both soul and body, for the breaking of that law which he never had power to keep? may more, to punish him for that evil which he could not avoid; because his peremptory decree from all eternity had reprobated him unto it: and if this be true, that tribunal would not be just, where the sentence of everlasting fire shall be pronounced against a man for that very action in which he was merely passive, having no power to avoid it; this were to make God unjust in his proceedings with mankind, for the recompence of good or evil cannot be given to good or evil, that are so, not freely, but of necessity, for where necessity is, there is no place for re-

tribution. And therefore how vain and simple are we in our thoughts, words and actions, when we place mens Nativities under fatal constellations, or their actions under a peremptory decree, when as God hath given men liberty to live freely under his righteous judgments? It were injustice in God to punish such that he had first made such; therefore a point of ignorance & madness for any that believe the resurrection of the dead, and the day of judgement, where God will render to all according to their works, for him to say, that there is a destiny lies upon their actions; for how can true faith and piety stand to this monstrous assertion? But ,

4. If this were so, then all the whole life of man would be but a destiny, all our imaginations would be destiny, and all the several changes and events that fall out in a nation or kingdome would be but by chance, and a kind of fatal necessity, if there were truth in this opinion, then we should do just nothing; for if it be Gods decree to purpose sin within, and an extrinsecal necessity rule us without; to what purpose were preaching and hearing if men be not capable of exhortation? all such means are in vain, and will never convert a sinner: or to what end is duty pressed, and men called upon to repent, to get grace, to be meek and humble? yea why are there promises made in

in Christ Jesus through believing that we may obtain remission of sins , if that be a truth, which some affirme, that the peremptory decree of Almighty God rules all, and that to this or that end men were born? And if lawes do nothing , wherefore were they made? wherefore were Ordinances prescribed , if they contribute nothing to help us heaven-ward? and why is it that ministers accommodate themselves by meet words, fit to work on mens understandings and affections, and with the reasonableness of Christian religion labour to captivate their wills, to bring them under obedience, if by a peremptory decree, which is unalterable, they are designed to another end? wherefore are the promises of mercy, and the threats of eternal judgement made use of, if there be no power in man that is capable of perswasion, and that will admit of a change from evil to good? I am sure such a tenent is none of the doctrine of the holy Catholick Church , for St. *Austin* pronounces them accursed that say any man is predestinated to sin ; and we do pronounce such accursed , if any such there be ; and many there are amongst us that say all events are from necessity : so that by this time you cannot but see how irrational and unchristian it is for a man to lay the cause of all his actions upon Gods peremptory decree. And so I have

I 4 done

done wichi that error, and come now to the other opinion, which will have all actions regulated by the influence of stars.

And here secondly, we utterly deny that any action is brought about or necessitated by the influence of stars, or in respect of any fatal constellation ; for though it be true, that there are infinite of heavenly bodies, conformable to the inferiour creatures, and that there are some particular planets, which have special influence upon, and domination over some particular climates over which they are placed, and therefore it is that we read of the *sweet influences of Pleiades, and of Mazzoroth in his season,* Job 38. 31. *and the whole heavens shall hear the earth,* Hosea 2. 21. so that we see there is a correspondence held between the stars above, and the creatures below the firmament, though some are destructive in their courses, and fight against their enemies ; thus *the stars in their courses are said to fight against Sisera,* Judg. 5. 20. and hence it is said, there is a heavenly vessel that empties it self into the lower vessel, and that every herb discovers it self to be useful for this or that part of mans body, by the similitude which it carries unto that part for which it is medicinal ; and that every one hath governing from its proper star, that every thing living hath a starry influence upon

upon it, and that there is not a man, beast, or stone, but hath influence from the stars: now granting all this to be a truth (as it is the opinion of some) yet it will be still found an infallible assertion, that though all the stars at once were malignant, they could not force any man to sin, their malevolent aspects cannot compel any man to commit iniquity: indeed by the fall of *Adam* our nature was corrupted, and so the creature became subject unto vanity, yet as we recover our selves from destruction in the second *Adam*, they lose that power of vanity, and so by consequence no extrinsical meanes can be the cause of sin in respect of a fatal constellation: but to say we were born during the predominancy of such or such a Planネット, and our guidance in the way to eternal life is from God alone is a most certain truth; for the sun and Moon which are the great lumi- naries of heaven and earth, can do no more by their power towards our good or evil estate, then a lame man can help himself to walk that hath no legs; nay the Angels in Heaven can do no more then wish and long for the prosperity of Gods chosen. Therefore how much of vanity is there in those minds who impute that power to ce- lestial creatures, which God never in- tended they should possess? for take them at the best, and they are but such instruments

as

as can doe nothing without him, *that doth whatsoever he will both in Heaven and in Earth, the Sea and all deep places.* We must not when we doe that which is evil lay the charge upon God, or the Stars, or the Angels, who are the instruments that act those Stars.

1. We must not lay the blame on God; *Let no man say when he is tempted he is tempted of God, &c.* St. James 13.13. No, let no man say he hath caused me to erre, or that it is through the Lord that I fell away, for he hath no need of the sonne of man, saith the son of Syrach, *Ecclesiasticus* 15.11,12. For the Lord hateth all abomination; so contrary is sinne unto his Holiness, that his eyes are upon them that fear him; and they that truly love God, will do his will, and obey his Commandements; for they know that Gods Justice hath no need to advance its glory by the destruction of their lives. Nor

2. Can any man justly impute his sinnes to the holy Angels; for it is the property of them to hearken to the voice of God, and alwayes to be doing of that which is good: *O praise the Lord ye Angels of his, ye that excel in strength, ye that fulfill his commands, and hearken unto the voice of his words,* Psal.103.20,21. Therefore certainly, they that fulfil Gods command, and hearken to his voice, will be farre

farre enough from causing others to commit that which they hate, especially in the Children of God, for whose sakes they are made ministring Spirits. But then some will be ready to excuse themselves, and lay the fault upon the Devil and his evil Angels : it is true, the Prince of the Aire rules in the children of disobedience ; but it is as true, they give up themselves unto him, their lusts first ruled in their members, before Satan got domination over their hearts; they are taken captives at his pleasure, but they first give up themselves willingly to be captivated, they are willing to lie under the yoke of Egyptian bondage, nor care they for other freedome then what the service of sinne will allow of ; and therefore our Saviour tels the Jews, *You are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father you will doe.* The lusts of your father you will obey ; you have a lust to doe whatsoever he wills, and your will is bent to doe whatsoever your lust dictates; and yet men would fain make God the author of their evil , as if he had decreed that to come upon them which they cannot refuse. *To this end* (saith St. Austin) *evil men lay not the blame of their vicious actions upon their evil nature, but upon the Stars, or on Gods peremptory Decree;* whereas what is sinne, is voluntary, and what is not voluntary is not sinne. Saint Paul saith,

Ye

Ye have yeilded your members servants unto sinne. So that we must not lay the fault upon the Stars, but upon our own perverse wills; for though the Stars doe draw vicious passions, as in melancholy hearts, in some anger, and in others wanton love, &c. And though by nature we readily yeild to those influences, yet there is power in grace, which is able, and doth break in every regenerate man the power of the Stars: But if we give up our selves to sinne, we must needs yeild unto those evil passions, whereas a wise man, even by his very reason, will domineer over the malignant influence of any Star; and though the corruption of our nature, or the evil influence of the Stars, may incline us to any kinde of vice, as lying, stealing, to commit adultery, &c. yet as we are rational creatures we may and ought to strive against them, labouring to get power from above to assist us: and to that end is it that we are born again by holy Baptisme; for this cause came we into the Christian Church, that we might no longer live after the lusts of the Gentiles which know not God, but that we forsaking the lusts of the flesh, following godliness with the greatest eagerness, and sharpest conflicts that a renewed heart can use against stubborn and rebellious flesh, that our whole man may be wound upon

up to so high a pitch of Piety, that *in righteousness and godly sincerity we may perfect holiness in the fear of God, and in our several stations follow God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, &c.* Ephes. 5. 1, 2.

And so I have done with the end as asserted, *To this end was I borne, and for this cause came I into the world, &c.*

The next thing in order to be handled, is the Action, *viz.* *To bear witness: For so saith our Saviour, To this end was I borne, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.*

F I N I S.



A second
NATIVITIE
SERMON.

SERMON VI.

St. JOHN 18. 37.

*To this end was I born, and for
 this cause came I into the
 world, that I should bear wit-
 nesse unto the truth.*

Intro-
 duction.

AN imprudent discourse atten-
 ded with ambitious thoughts,
 was the first occasion of *Adams*
 misery ; and the mercie of
 God in making the New Covenant, is the
 principal cause of the Serpents ruine ; whose
 mis-

mischeivous head was early broke by the promised Seed (the true Messiah) whom the Patriarchs foresaw, and the Prophets foretold: The Patriarchs foresaw him, *Genesis 49. 10.* The Prophets foretold him under diverse representations, *Esay*, by the *Emmanuel*; *Jeremy*, the *Branch*; *Daniel*, the *Messiah*; *Zachary*, *By him that riseth on high*; *Haggai*, *The desire of all Nations*.

That God should be Incarnate, that sinners should be saved, that a despicable man should save a World, was thought so incredible, that the Prophet *Esay* cryes out, *Who hath beleevered our report?* (which was in time fulfilled, *But when the fulnesse of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman*, &c. *Gal. 4. 4.*) though the newes was true, and proclaimed from Heaven by an Angel, and that of great Joy, for that on this day was born a Saviour Christ the Lord; what was in the Prophets prophesied concerning his coming, was by himself fulfilled in time; what they pointed at, he pointed out, and by a Miracle shewed it to the Wise Men, saying, *Where is he that is borne King of the Iewes?* for we have seen his Star in the East, and we are come to worship him, *St. Matthew 2. 2.* Yet when he came to his own, they received him riot, but rejected the counsels of God, as they did that slew the

Esay 7. 14.
Jer. 23. 5.
Dan. 9.
25, 26.
Zachary
6. 12.
Haggai
2. 7.

Pro-

Prophets, who declared the coming of the just One; for when he was come, he was forced to be gone, and flie for the safety of his life into a forraign Country, to avoid the fury of that mighty *Nimrod*, whose pretended worship was onely the dark vizour of an inhumane murder; disguising his wicked purposes under the beautiful mask of a desired amity: no wonder therefore, that there are some amongst us that call themselves Christs, when there are those that call themselves Christians, that would, and doe disown Christs Nativity; and this old *Simeon* (by inspiration) calculated at his Nativity, saying, *This child is set for a signe which shall be spoken against*, St. Luke 2. 34. And wicked people make it good, as if he had not been foretold by Prophets, nor come into the world in the fulnesse of time at an appointed day; *and that for us men, and for our Salvation, Christ came down from Heaven, and was incarnate in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary*: it is a work that many would not believe, saith God, *Hab. 1.5.* which was fulfilled, *Acts 13. 41.* *Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for I work a work in your dayes, a work which you shall not beleeve, &c.* For so would they have hindred the Author and finisher of our Faith from working that which he had wrought, and what God had

had set down should be done which was accordingly fulfilled, that he should not be borne, but to witnesse to the truth ; for he himself saith so much of himself. *To this end was I borne, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witnesse to the truth.*

In which words you may remember I have formerly observed these three parts.

1. An Action.
2. The End.
3. The Object.

1. The Action, Christs Incarnation ;
He was borne, he came into the world.

2. The End ; and that pointed at, and pointed out :

1. Pointed at ; *To this end, and for this cause.*
2. Pointed out ; *To bear witnesse.*
3. The Object was *the truth* ; *To this end was I borne, and for this cause came I into the world, to bear witnesse to the truth.*

And since the end is the first thing in the intention, though last in execution, I did begin with the end

Pointed at, and that was *to this end, and for this cause* : But

I shall now proceed to the proper work of this day, Christs Nativity ; *I was born, I came into the world* : and here at the

first step of our discourse, we are plunged into an unfathomed depth of mystery; for this he that was here borne, is the same he that calls himself *I am that I am*, *Exodus 3.14*. That Socinian that saith he was not very God, is a blasphemer; *I am that I am*, it is the Name of God, whose Essence is from everlasting to everlasting, and to be born notes his humanity; and how this work was, that he that is *I am* should be borne, and close with the Deity, tongue cannot expresse, and heart cannot conceive; we can conceive how nothing is but what is in and of our selves, and not that neither but with much imperfection; for the first of us that was so desirous of knowledge, left us nothing but a penury of what we were; and if we know not our selves, we cannot possibly conceive how God was made man, and at the same time remain incommunicable; or how he being incommunicable, did vouchsafe to partake of humane Nature; yet thus was Christ both God and Man in the same person; as man he had a mother that bare him, and as God a Father that begat him: but who can without admiration speak of such a Sonne, or tell of such a generation, that was like both, & yet like neither? like neither; for consider him as Man, and so he hath no similitude of an ineffable Essence; look upon him as God, and so he bears

bears no proportion with the Virgins Womb ; and yet like both ; as God, like his Father, as man, like his mother ; God and yet the sonne of a woman ; Man, and still the Image of his Father, and that from Eternity, being *without beginning of dayes, or end of time* ; Gods Son and Motherlesse, a Virgins Babe and Fatherlesse ; without a Father as borne of a Woman, and without a Mother as begotten of God : Thus was he God and motherlesse, as begotten and not borne ; a man and Fatherlesse, because borne and not begotten ; we must beleeve both beyond enquiry, because more is possible with God then is conceiveable with man, and divine Mysteries should perswade us to beleeve that they are undoubted truths ; though our reason cannot comprehend them ; for what we cannot understand by beleeving, we must believe beyond understanding ; and of all the divine Mysteries, this of our blessed Saviours Incarnation especially, whose very mystery heightens Faith to no lesse then a Miracle ; and where a Miracle is wrought wonder must needs be created, and both these two meet in this one act of Faith, exercised about the hypostaticall union ; for beleeving we wonder, and marvelling we beleeve, and make our blessed Saviours Incarnation the object of both ; we beleieve what we marvell at, and yet

wonder at our Faith, still doubling the Miracle by marvelling that we can at once both wonder and beleieve: it is a wonder, and yet this wonder is the object of our Faith; for how can we doe lesse then marvell, when we consider that on the Fathers side he should be God and no man, on the Mothers side man and no God, and yet both God and Man? For Eternity had begotten man but once, because begotten from Eternity; his Father begot him equall to God, his Mother bare him like to Man; he was man besides God, and therefore Man and no God, and yet God and Man, for when he was made man he ceased not to be God which he was before: like as the Sun loseth not its brightness, though shadowed in the clouds; so nor Christ his glory, though obscured in flesh, he was not so conceived in his Mother as to be separated from his Father; Christ was not lesse equal to his Father by being like his Mother; *the Word was made flesh*, St. John 1. 14. and not lesse Word then Flesh, by an assumption of the flesh, not consumption of the Word; the Word that God by flesh did present to our sight was real Flesh, and was not lesse God still; for he is no lesse God now that he is clad in humane clay, then when onely clothed with deified Glory; he remaines God and Man in

in one person, very God and very Man in one singular subsistence, he took the person of Man, and the substance, by converting the person to his proper being ; and that this may not altogether seeme strange to your understandings, please to turn your eyes inward, and an example thereof will be presented ; for if man hath the life of Plants, and the sense of Beasts, and both in conjunction with the reasonable soul in an individual being, why may not Christ take the Soul of man into union with himself, and yet consist in his Divinity, making a Trinity in the union of his Person ? For as he was God and Man in the humane nature, he consisted of a Deity, a soul and a body, there a Trinity in unity, here unity in Trinity ; he was one person not divided, a person of the Trinity distinguished, not divided ; for every person in the Sacred Trinity is perfect God, distinguished into persons, but not divided in substance, for all take propriety each with the other ; the Father God, the Son God, and the holy Ghost God, and yet not three, but one God, as we are taught by the holy Catholick Faith to beleeve ; yet that God might redeeme us from our iniquities, he that was perfect God equal with the Father, took upon him our flesh, and therefore it is that God was said to suffer what man himself should have borne ;

only here is the admired union of natures, but not natural of persons,

But what were the reasons why he whose name is *I am* should be borne, so as to say of himself, *To this end was I borne, and for this cause came I into the world, to bear witness to the truth?*

1. To make God and Man one by atonement; and therefore it was necessary he should be of both natures, whose office is to reconcile both persons.

2. He was to doe that for us which was impossible for man to doe, and to suffer what was unmeet for God to undergoe; and that he might both doe and suffer for us he took the blessed Virgin *Mary* for his mother, that from her he might receive a body capable of suffering; but it was his Divinity which enabled his Humanity to suffer what our Souls deserved.

3. He was to undergoe for an infinite offence, for man had sinned, and none but God could satisfie for an infinite offence; it being reasonable that the same nature that broke the Law should pay the Debt; and therefore it was necessary for him to be God as well as Man, that did undertake to make God and Man to be reconciled and made one.

4. Had he been God and not Man, man could not have been redeemed; had he been

been onely man and not God, the Devils would have boasted ; but he was both God and man, that our redemption might be finished , and the Devils malice silenced : whence wisely was our redemption shared between God and man, because the arbitrement was such , that a mere man could not undertake to appease a God offended, neither one nor the other nature would have, or could have relieved us single, because he must be God that will be mediator from God to man , and he must be man that he may be an intercessor to God for man : and this mystery though our reason cannot fathom, yet our belief must reach it, our faith must believe what our hearts and tongues cannot expresse, & our faith is then proficient when it hath attained so high, and not before ; for we can say more by silence then by words, & when we find him in our souls by *Hallelujahs* and praise, we shall then know thee O Saviour, not for thy self, but our selves , and it is our faith to believe that as thou art so shall we be, though not so fully: therefore let every one make it his
"request , O that thou wouldest come down
"from heaven , and dwell in our hearts by
"faith and love , who out of love to man
"kind came in flesh , when faith and truth
"were banished out of the earth ; and that
"thou shouldest so come as to say , *To this end
was I born , and for this cause came I into*

the world, &c. And so much may suffice for that part of his incarnation, the end of his coming. I now come to that of his Nativity, *his coming into the world*, and here three things are to be considered.

1. The Dignity of his person.

2. The Humility of his condescension.

3. The Place of his entertainment.

1. The Dignity of his person, in that he was the Sonne of God.

2. The Humility of his condescension, in that he would clothe himself with the rags of our mortality.

3. The Place, unworthy of his entertainment, being the world.

Of these in their order.

1. The Dignity of his person, and that as he is the Sonne of God by nature, and as in his Birth the most noble person that ever was; on the Fathers side he is God, very God, the very God of one substance with the Father, as you have heard, and which to deny is no lesse then blasphemy; for when he calls God Father, the *Iewes* knew that thereby *he made himself equall with God*, St. John 10. 33. He as Gods Sonne was alwayes with the Father, and so everlastingely great as he was God; and not onely so, but he was full of dignity on his

his Mothers side, as he was descended from the *Patriarchs*, and *Royal Kings* of *Iudah*; so he was a Prince renowned.

1. For his authority, because he doth what he will, both in heaven and in earth, in the sea, and in all deep places.

2. For his power, he commands the wind, and the waves, and they obey him.

3. For the largeness of his dominions, heaven and earth is his, and the fulness thereof; his dominion is from one part of heaven and earth unto the other.

4. For multitude of Subjects; *Angels*, *Saints* and *Kings*, yea and those that depose *Kings* are his Subjects, either voluntarily or against their wils, for he sits down among the *Gods*.

5. For lasting, his Domination is everlasting, and he shall reign over the house of *Jacob* for ever, and of his Kingdome there shall be no end, *St. Luke* 1. 33.

6. For fulness, In his presence is fulness of joy, &c.

7. For subduing of enemies; Bring those my enemies that would not that I should reign over them, &c. But why go I about to describe that which is infinite, or blazon the glory of a power that is incomprehensible? It made holy *David* cry out, Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him, &c. Man is as a thing of nought, for when he was not guilty, being innocent,

Psal. 13.
5, 6.

St. Mar. 4.
41.

Psal. 72.8.

Psal. 16.
11, 6.7-

St. Luke
19. 27.

Psal. 8. 4.

innocent, and had not sinned, he could merit no favour; but when he was guilty, and by sinning had deserved not to be what he was before, yet then God to shew the freeness of his mercy, that he who had made the world for man, would not make man for nothing, and though his *Image* was defaced by him, yet he would not have it ruined; that goodness that planted him in uprightness, would not have him presently destroyed when found in wickedness; no, he was prone to mercy, though provoked to wrath by beholding that in man which his infinite Power never created; and therefore to this purpose he came into the world, that *he might destroy the works of the devil.*

1 St. John
3. 8.

1 St. Pet.
1. 18.

St. John
3. 16.

To apply this.

Since God was pleased so to honour us, as not to redeem us *with corruptible things, as silver and gold, nor with the blood of bulls and goats*, nor the power of men and Angels, but by the death and passion of his own Son, of his own Substance; *If God so loved us, that he gave his only begotten Son for us*, why should we think any thing too much for him, or through the ambition and pride of our hearts, think ourselves too good to serve him, or imagine we can be happy without him? Or on the contrary, let us not suppose our sins to be

more

more and greater then he is able or willing to pardon: since God is pleased to send his Son to redeem you, why should you think your selves too good to serve him? let the beasts be sensual, and the devils wicked, why should you be scornful, or so far degenerate, as to do any action that may intitle you to the insensibleness of the one, or to the losse of the other? to be ungrateful to the God of Heaven is impious, therefore bear your selves worthy of the Favourites of Heaven, since Gods Son came into the world to redeem you. And so I come to the second thing noted in his coming, namely

The humility of his Condescension.

If love to the Father, and respect to our souls, became to the Son of God so strong and powerful an inducement, as to cause him to humble himself so far, as in his own person to come and bear witness to the Truth, then thou art inexcusable **O man**, that sees the *Truths* of God opposed, his *Worship* represt, his *Ministers* supprest, and dost not what thou canst to maintain the truth; for every one, in his proportion and degree, *to this end is born, and comes into the world*, that he, after the example of his Saviour, should bear witness to the truth. And so I come to the Nativity it self, Christ's coming into the world.

Came

Came into the world.

We read in Scripture of a threefold coming of Christ.

1. Imperiously, *To give the Law.*
2. Graciously: *To give the Gospel.*
3. Gloriously: *When he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

The first was to the *world*, the second in the *world*, and the third will be at the end of the *world*.

1. In the first, he came as *a God*.
2. In the second, as *a Saviour*.
3. In the third, he will come like *a Judge*, to require an account of every *man*, for every particular action, whether it be *good*, or whether it be *evil*.

His first coming under the Law in Levitical types is not here intended, but the coming mentioned in this place is his second coming, when he came as a Saviour to give the Gospel; Christ Jesus, who is God-man, thus came into the world, and because as God he is omnipresent, some will have his presence in every place, and his being in every thing; 'tis true, he was with us before he came to us, but that God that is omnipresent, and fills all places, yet hath divers transmigrations in Scripture; Heaven is his place or throne of glory, and earth his foot-stool; but he is said to come to us, when he manifests himself to us after

a new manner, and this coming of his is by an act of new Mercy ; he that is all Mercy, now vouchsafed to his Creatures a new way of coming, such as was never manifested before, for he came to the old world in types and figures , he was *a Lamb slain from the beginning of the world*, when the Elect was, Christ was there, not only as the second person in the sacred Trinity , but as *a Propitiation for man* ; in short, he alwayes came in purpose, he early came in the Promises, and he successfully came in *the fulness of time* ; the Promises could not be frustrated , and the Prophets could not be mistaken ; he is given to us in the Gospel, and married to us by his Spirit , having assumed our flesh in the blessed Virgin ; and that he should thus come to us was great humility, from sitting in Heaven, and hearing the *Quire of Angels* singing his praises, working wonders in heaven and in earth, &c. yet he forsook all this to find us out , who were rolling in clay ; for when he came to glorifie our nature we were in trouble, we could be found in no condition but that of misery, when he *bowed the heavens and came down*, he then turned the name of Majesty into Pity, his Glory into Humility, and laying aside his Glory, he leapt from that his Greatness , and came and dwelt among us , clothed in flesh: indeed had he come in the form of an *Angel*,

2 Phil. 8.

gel, that had been condescension; or but to our flesh, or had he but come to the circumcision of his flesh, that had been a large extent of his love, for his circumcision was no other than the shedding of his most precious bloud, one drop whereof would have been sufficient for the ransom of a world; but he took upon him the form of a servant, and that to wash his Disciples feet, which was a step lower for God to tread; nay lower than that, *he humbled himself to the death, and that of the crosse*, where he found his enemies to be his Judges, and those that hated him, falsly to accuse his sacred Works; but both divided, for there you have one drawing up a charge against his life, and here another answering for his life; here one proclaiming his innocency, there another crying out, he is guilty; yet notwithstanding, amidst the many divided tongues there are found some united hands to slay him. Indeed the Atheists scoffe at this, saying, shall we begin our Religion at a Babe in the manger? or believe in him whose poverty was so great, that to pay tribute for his allegiance, was fain to be obliged to a Fish for money? whose penury necessitated him to beg for a living? who was hungry, and thirsty, and sleepy, and sorrowful, yea so despicably mean and contemptible, that his own kindred was ready to lay hands on him

him, as one out of his wits? and he complained for want of lodging, esteeming himself more despicable than the *foxes* of the earth, or the *fowles* in the air: this was the esteem, or very little better, which the world had of him, of whom they were altogether unworthy, not considering why he so came, for he came to be thus mean, that we might become honourable; therefore did he come to be killed by sinners, that sinners might live in his death; to die for them, that they might die to sin; and though they now crucifie afresh the Son of God by their iniquities, yet a time will come when they will be glad of the saving virtue of one drop of that bloud, which they now disgrace.

To apply this.

If the Son of God came in such humility, as to humble himself to come into the world to die for us; why should we disdain to do our friends good, though never so mean, even to the degree of a servant, seeing that when the Son of God came to redeem us, he did it in the form of a servant? Again, why should we think our selves too good to serve our brethren, since Christ disdained not to wash his Disciples feet, shewing himself in nothing so much as in humility? And what doth this teach us, but to lay a foundation for

greater

greater glory? that we beginning in humility here, may be raised to glory hereafter; for he that is low shall be exalted, and in his humility is a follower of him that came to the place of his reception in the lowest form: which brings me to the third particular, naniely,

The place of his entertainment, the World.

And it is taken two wayes:

1. Either for the frame of this vast Globe.
2. Or for the Inhabitants thereof.

But I understand it here for the fabrick of this vast earth, which is too mean, and altogether unworthy to entertain him, nay it is not of capacity to do it, for how should this great house hold his glorious Majesty, when the *Heaven of Heavens is not able to contain him?* It was humility for him to come into this world, and yet he came to the world to shew his humility, *for the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, &c.* and he abhorred not the Virgins womb, though a simple Lady; I mean simple in respect of outward glory or worldly riches, for so poor she was, that at her Churching she was necessitated instead of a *Lamb* to offer a pair of young *Pigeons*; and though he did seem to straiten himself at his conception, because he had little room in the womb, yet he was more straitened

straithened at his birth, *for there was no room for him in the Inne*; which shews the greatness of his love to us, that our blessed Saviour will want room on earth, rather than we shall want Mansions in Heaven: the blessed Virgin is driven to so great necessity, that her chamber must be in the stable, her bed no better than that of straw, and the glorious Babe lodged in no other cradle, but that of the manger. Never was Glory in so homely a place before: God at first brought forth man like a King; and placed him in Paradise, to rule over the Beasts; but God is brought forth man in the place of beasts. See then vile man, who it is whom thou hast neglected in Heaven, by sinning on earth? the Lord of Men and Angels is now made the companion of Beasts, because thou hast made thyself *like the beasts that perish*; how canst thou not admire at the low condescension of thy Saviour, that he should so come into the world, and be born of such mean parents, and in so base a place as is a stable; and that which is worse, to be laid in a manger also? *O the heighth and depth of the love of the Son of God!* Who would not fall into admiration to see God in a manger? God is in his holy *Temple*, what shall he descend? Yea we believe him when he said he would do so; and now that he hath so done, who can forbear lo-

St. Matt.
18. 3.

ving of him? view him in the manger, and there you see him become food for beasts, for men who are transformed by beastly lusts; and yet he will be found in the *Temple* also, that so he may gather both great and small: he is meat for strong men, yea, and he will be milk to the little ones also; and unless every one of us *become as little ones*, we shall in no wise enter into the *Kingdome of Heaven*: he was born that he might have us born again; he was wrapt in swadling-cloths, to teach us, that we should not despise men how mean soever in appearance; and in a stable, to shew his communicableness to all persons; he was laid in a manger, not for food to the beasts, but for bread to men. Indeed as he is God he gives fodder to the cattle of the earth, and the fowles in the air, for he feeds the young Ravens; but it is only unto men that he gives himself as bread; and in a mystery was he found in a stable, to shew us, that as men became beasts by their fall, so he was found among the beasts, that he might be food for all, and that beastly man might find and cast the bread of life: he will also become bread, that *so we may indeed eat his flesh and drink his blood*. Therefore since Christ came in such elements; hence learn

St. John
6. 55.

Use.

That none but clean beasts must eat of such food, and none but such truly can do it: those

those that consider not what is really the body and bloud of Christ, eat not bread, and drink not wine, but eat and drink their own condemnation; but they that by a true and lively faith do eat and drink the body and bloud of Christ spiritually in the blessed Eucharist, do truly fulfil the great end of his coming into the world, for thus he came and was born that we might reap the benefit of his life and death; and he came so meanely, that his poverty might enrich us, so lowly that his humility might strengthen us; and though we disdainfully neglected the means of our salvation, yet he took care of us before all time, and manifested his love in coming to us in the fulness of time. Therefore to wind up all, Praise thou the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name. Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thy iniquities, and healeth all thy infirmities; which saveth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the Eagles: for he will not deal with us after our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities.

1 Cor. 11.

29.

Ps. 103. 1,
2,3,4,&c.



Testis fidelis
OR
A faithfull Witness.

SERMON VII.

St. JOHN 18. 37.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

Intro-
duction.

THe words of my Text are like the eye of a well-drawn picture, that still which way soever you go, looks towards you; for which way so ever you consider the words they still have reference to all the parts, and

and circumstances of Christ's coming in the flesh ; if you look upon his conception , which coming was foretold by an Angel as witness thereof, S. *Luke* 1. 31. yet there it was but the preparation to that coming which is in my text, (*viz.*) his Nativity , which is not left without a witness neither, in that St. *Stephen*, one of the twelve , who was to testifie of him , is joyned next unto the birth-day of our Saviour , he being the first that suffered for him , and therefore called by the *Holy Catholick Church* St. *Stephens* day ; but that Protomartyr who here is a witness to that witness in my Text , did witness what the great witness did both do and suffer ; but that this truth might be established by more then a single testimony , our Mother the *Church* doth celebrate St. *Johns* day, in commemoration of that beloved Disciple , whose faithful affection begot in him an Eagles eye , wherewith to behold those glorious mysteries which none else of all the Disciples , were able to reveal ; and that we might not be without occasions of stirring up our affections also , *God so loved the world that he gave his onely begotten Son* , and here is the onely begotten Son so loving that he gives himself for us : and as his Disciples testified the truth of Christ living and dying ; so the *innocent* babes slain for his sake by cruel *Herod* , did witness to the

truth, not by speaking but by dying: but he who is the great witness both by speaking & dying did bear witness for us, while himself was an infant, antedating his cruel passion by a bloody circumcision, instituted as a pledge of our interest in his covenant, which was wonderfully effected by his own person when manifested in the world: hence the *Epiphany* is famous for the wise men, who first made discovery of this blessed babe by the guidance of an unusual light: and here now is that star of *Jacob*, which leads to the rising in his birth; and by this was the King of the Jewes first found out, that afterwards by his people was betrayed into the hands of enemies to be condemned as a malefactor, and as an enemy to *Caesar*; and that with the greatest formality of justice, being brought before a President, and arraigned for his life; and yet notwithstanding their malice and cruelty, he still asserted his innocencie, though he knew he should die for it, and therefore he saith, *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth.*

Look upon the words once more, and they present you with the faithfulness and constancy of our blessed Saviours testimony, even then when he was deserted by his most intimate friends and servants; and at that time especially, wherein (as man) he

he stood most in need of them, being now had in examination before the Judgement-seat of *Pilate*; wherein you have fulfilled that saying of his, *that he came to his own, and his own received him not*. Nay, he was so far from being received by them, that he was forsaken by all, despised of most, and pitied by few; and yet herein also he came to do his Fathers will, by a willing death witnessing to that truth which some had foresworn, and others denied, saying, *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.*

In which words you may remember I have observed these parts:

1. An action.
2. An end.
3. The object.

1. The action, *he was born, he came into the world.*

2. The end

1. Pointed at, *to this end and for this cause.*

2. Pointed out, *to bear witness.*

3. The object, *the truth.*

And whereas the end in every action is first in intention, though last in execution, I did begin with the end, the right end

and that pointed at, *To this end and for this cause, &c.* and I came to the second thing, namely

2. The action which was Christ's *incarnation and his coming into the world*; *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world*: and come now to the third thing; the end of the action, wherefore he came, and why he was born; and that is

3. The object, *the truth, to bear witness*. And *to bear witness to the truth*: and in this third part there are two things considerable,

1. The end.

2. The object.

The one in reference unto Christ, the other unto Christians.

1. In reference unto Christ as the primary intention of them; and so the words concern our Saviour, as he was a witness unto the truth in his own person.

2. In the extent of them, so they concern us, for we also are to bear witness to the truth; and as in the testimony of our Saviour, so in ours, there must concurre to demonstrate our fidelity,

1. The end.

2. The action.

3. The object.

For we are in our particular station to bear witness to the truth as well as others; for Christ in all the ages of the world hath still had some faithful servants to witness for

for him, though they continually met with opposition.

For though under the Law witnesse was given unto him at divers times, and in sundry manners, &c. yet not onely the vain errors of the Gentiles, but also the careless perversness of the *Iewes*, led multitudes of people into a disbelief of God himself, and the truth of our blessed Saviours coming into the world ; insomuch that the Prophet *Esay* saith, *Who hath believed our report ?* Esay 53. 1. Yea, the people *changed the truths of God into lies, and caused the way of truth to be evill spoken of* ; endeavouring by all means, if possible, to banish truth out of the earth ; but notwithstanding all their malicious oppositions, the truths of God were not left without record, for there is not any one person in the Sacred Trinity, but bears witnesse to the truth ; for there are three that bear record in Heaven, *The Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost, and these three are one*, St. John 5. 7. The Father promising, the holy Ghost preparing, and the Son assuming, or taking what was so prepared for him, that he himself was a witnesse of himself ; for so he saith, *I am one that bear witnesse of my self*, St. John 8. 18. The way to the truth, and the truth of the way, and the life of all came to witnesse to them both ; yet you finde him saying, *If*

I bear witness of my self, my witness is not true, St. John 5.31. Places seemingly contradictory, and yet easily reconciled, if truly considered: for in the one he spake to those that acknowledged no more in him then Humanity; in the other he discovers his Deity, and equality with the Father, shewing his submision to him as man; that though in the one they would not, yet by the other they may be convinced. And since Christ as man was without error, and could not be guilty of falsehood, then it is not true to affirme Christs witnessing to the truth is invalid, as the *Jewes* supposed; for though what he spake was truth in it self, yet in their acception it was not so accounted; and though that truth most times is suspected which barely testifies of it self; yet it could not be so imputed unto Christ, because he is light it self, and light helps to discover both it self and others; and therefore it must remain a truth, that Christs coming into the world was to bear witness to the truth, both

In { Words
and
Works.

Christ Jesus our Redeemer bare witness to the truth

i. In

1. In Words; his words were such as the *Iewes* were convinced by them, For they conclude, *never man spake like him*, St. John 7. 46. his words were of such energy as that they proved all his actions authentick.

2. In his works; he testified of the truth, in so much that his very enemies said, *when Christ comes will he do more miracles than those which this man hath done?* St. Joh. 7. 31. and since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind, Saint John 9. 32, 33. for if this man was not of God he could do nothing: therefore when St. John Baptists Disciples came with this message, *art thou he that should come, or do we look for another* he saith no more then *Go tell John what things you have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk, &c.* Saint Luke, 7. 22. and presently that precursor knew by his works that it was no other then the Messias: nor did he onely testify by saying and doing, but also by suffering and dying; for rather then truth shall suffer, he will die, and not one drop of blood shall be left in his veines, rather then the leaſt part of truth shall want a testimony; for he came to bear witness to the truth, and by dying gave testimony to the truth. And so I have done with the first, namely the end; and I come to the second thing, *viz.*

2. The object, *the truth*.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Truth is threefold:

1. There is the truth of Gods promises concerning the Messias.
2. The truth of the Substance, whereof the Types were but shadowes.
3. The truth of the Doctrines delivered to the people.

1. The truth of Gods promises concerning the Messias, he was promised in the beginning of time to him that was to be the Father of all living; for when God had made man a living Soul, and man by sinne had made himself a dying body, then was the promise of a quickning spirit, *Gen. 3.15.* She that was accursed for eating the forbidden fruit, shall now be blest in the fruit of her body.

2. As God promised him to the father of all living, so to the father of the Faithfull, *Gen. 15.18.* and it was to procure our good; *For in thy seed shall all the Nations of the earth be blessed.* *Gen. 18.18.* In him we have freedome from misery, and fulness of glory, and by him we have interest in glory, and comfort in calamity.

3. God promised Christ by the Prophets, and not onely that he should, but how he must be borne:

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, & bear a Son, and call his name Emanuel, Isa. 7. 14. How he should die; *After threescore and two weeks shall the Messiah be cut off, but not for himself, Dan. 9. 26.* How he should rise again; *for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption, Psalm. 16.*

10. Thus the Prophets foretold the incarnation of Christ, together with the several gradations thereof: but if you please we will once more consider the *Messias*, as chalked out in the Old Testament, you find him promised, *Gen. 22. 18.* then promised to be of the tribe of *Judah*, *Gen. 49.* 10. his *conception, birth, death and passion* at large set down by the Psalmist in the 22. *Psal.* his being *derided at, and lightly esteemed*, his being *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, expressed in the 118. *Psa.* nay foretold to be of the body of *Mary, Isa. 7. &c.* Hath God spoken, and will he not do? no, he spake that he might do it, yea he came to bear witness of his promises, that they might have a consummation, not a consumption; for as God promised, and the Prophets foretold, so he was looked for in the beginning; and in the fulness of time he came, because so promised; for the promises are the most and best part of his word: we expect nothing but promises, and of all the promises, none but Christ; for it is his mercy, not our deserts, *that all the promises are in Christ yea and amen.*

Thus

Thus you see the first truth demonstrated, the truth of Gods promise in sending the *Messias*.

2. The truth of the substance, whereof the types and figures under the law were but shadowes : how many things were there that presented Christ ? nay, in every thing where and when was not Christ prefigured ? each promise and prophecy speaks nothing foretold which he did not fulfil and do, that the shadowes might yield to the substance, that the types might have accomplishment as, well as abrogation, Christ came into the world ; all the types end in him, *He came to witness to the truth.*

3. The truth of doctrines of faith and manners.

1. For the doctrine of faith, take this instance ; the Prophet *Isa.* hath foretold, that *those that sat in darkness have seen a great light*, Isa. 9. 2. and Saint *John* saith, *this is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, St. John 1. 9. indeed concerning the doctrines of faith, there were divers in the world, some were false, and some likely, but the most true; the first two were they of the Philosophers, the third of our Saviour ; and how false they of the Philosophers were, is obvious to most, for they often changed the truth of God into lies, and truth was van-

ished

shed from those children of men ; some of them fancied many gods, some believed no God at all ; some granted an eternal being but no providence ; and some a providence, and yet did attribute all to fate ; but Christ came to maintain a *Trinity* of persons, and that in a divine *Essence*, and that he takes care of the whole world , and doth not necessitate any mans actions by a fatal destiny. And not onely were there errors in mens judgements, but

2. In their manners and waies : how great the errors of the Philosophers were, is well known to those that are and have been conversant in their writings ; and not onely they, but the Rabbins of old under the law , taught against literal hypocrisy, that no obedience is profitable, if it be not in observation of the whole Law ; and that not then neither, but when onely in the letter , and to mans appearance : but Christ when he came, he required truth in the inward parts, and what they stood for in the letter he required in the spirit , expounding their doctrine more strictly, saying, *It hath been said of old, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgement ; but I say unto you, whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement,* as is set down the 5, 6, 7. chap. of Saint Matthew. Christ came to witness to the truth, and did witness

ness to it in his Sermons, Judgements and Censures, Answers and Reprofes.

1. In his Sermons ; that his aduersaries could not but passe this censure of them, *Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth.* St. Matthew 22. 16.

2. In his judgements and censures ; for how did he use in reading, pleading, and deciding, to demonstrate his faithfulness ? you have the full story of the first of these in Saint Luke 7. 4. and so on, concerning his willingness to forgive the greatest debt : an example of the second is pregnant to this purpose, when he defended the pious woman against his Disciples for *anointing his Head with precious ointment* Saint Matthew 26. 10, 11, 12, 13. You have his faithfulness in the third, when against the *Scribes and Pharisees*, he became an advocate for himself, to defend that true power which the Father had committed to him, Saint John 8. 12. and so on.

3. In his Answers and Reprofes ; in his answers, though they were many times in silence, yet he convinced them by saying nothing ; and in his reprofes how true ? for when he spake, they were such as never man uttered, for faithfull, seasonable, and meek, never expressing any seeming passion but once, in purging the Temple

of

of those buyers and sellers, who had made his Fathers house a place of Merchandise, and instead of the house of Prayer, had turned it into a Den of Theeves : indeed he spared neither friend nor foe ; for when he reproved his Disciples, Saint *Luke* 9. 46. upon their contention for greatness, he did it in meekness, by the innocent similitude of a Child, ver. 48.

When to the Pharisees , he said, *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees hypocrites, for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautifull outwardly, but are within full of dead mens bones :* he did it in faithfulness, St. *Matthew* 23.27. And even of *Herod* he said no lesse, nor shewed he any fear of his power; for he said, *Goe ye, and tell that Fox, behold, I cast out Devils, and I doe cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected,* Saint *Luke* 13.32. whereby you see, he alwayes bare witness to the truth ; and wherein else should we follow his example? for every one, is obliged in word and work, in life and in death, to bear witness to the truth, every man in his place and calling. Indeed there is a speciall duty lies upon Magistrates, and all publick Officers, that they in their severall spheres, move exemplarily towards the mark of truth ; but most of all, upon the Ministers of the blessed Word and Sacraments ; for that which is laid

on them by way of obligation, is double, because they come into the world, the Church, as members thereof, and Officers therein; and that extraordinarily as called thereunto, inwardly, by the Spirit of God, and outwardly sent by those, that have power in the Church, lawfully to commission them thereto; and then they are obliged also to bear witness to the truth; as common Christians in their degree, that they may bear witness to the truth, in excellency of goodness following the excellency of all good, that good man, God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who left us his example as a pattern to imitate; who was full of *Humility*, strong in *believing*, wonderfull in *patience*, rich in *love*, and in all a patterne of *Holiness*: and it is the highest reason imaginable, that we should imitate him whom we pretend to worship, being carefull that we bring no dishonour to his name, by doing what he did not, or in refusing to doe what he did and commanded; but rather looking upon him as the author and finisher of our Faith, we may be ingaged to run (as he did) with *patience* *the race that is set before us*, taking all manner of encouragement from him; that so if we are unable, or unwilling to follow Christ in his Word commanding, yet we may doe it by his Word directing. And what though Christians meet with unreasonable

reasonable dealings from men; yet they must not turn away their ears from hearing, nor their tongues from speaking, nor their lives from suffering for the truth, if called thereunto: for since they were borne for this end, to follow the great exemplary who died for witnessing to the truth, they must not basely decline it; for he himself saith, *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, &c.* And so I have done with the words in their primary intention, as they concerned our Saviour; and come now

2. To the extension of them, as they concerne us; for since Christ in the whole course of his life is presented as a pattern of Holiness, we that profess our selves to be Christians, our eyes must so look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our Faith, that we should follow his steps, and as he did, so we should bear witness to the truth: and to this end were we borne, and for this cause came we into the world, that we should bear witness to the truth. And so I begin again with

The act, to bear witness.

For though all the Sacred Word be called a testimony, because sufficient to bear witness to it self; yet God will have every truth of his established by the mouths and lives of Christians also; and for this cause, besides others, came Christ into the

world : yea Christ, who is the Word and Truth it self, took the witness of others to himself, and joyned himself to their witness; for the whole sacred Trinity bears record of his truth.

1. The Father, and that to the Saints of old, he did then bear witness of him; the substance whereof was audibly delivered in that voice, *This is my beloved Sonne in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him,* St. Matthew 17. 5.

2. The Word ; he did bear witness to himself, when he said, *I am from him, and he hath sent me,* Saint John 7. 29. And

3. The holy Ghost in Scripture testifies of him ; yea all the Scriptures, St. John 5.8. And all the testimonies therein that speak of him, whether it be by way of promise, or prophesie , you shall finde them all meeting as so many lines in this one centre, Saint Luke 1.31. Yea, the Scriptures of the New Testament especially clearly set down all the parts of his incarnation, both as to the divine and humane nature.

1. His Nativity, Saint Matthew 1.18.

2. His Majesty, 1 Saint John 1, 2, 3, 4.

3. His Life, in the story of all the Gospels.

4. His Death, St. Mat. 27. 35. Saint

Saint Marke 15.24. Saint Luke
23.35. Saint John 19.18.

5. His Resurrection, Saint Luke
24. 1. &c.

6. His Ascension into Heaven,
Act 1. 10.

Nay, Saint John Baptist was sent before him as a witness to prepare his way, and to bear witness of *that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and that all men through him might believe*, Saint John 1. 6, 7. For truth must have its testimony from Heaven, and by the Scriptures, besides the witness of men; and that for these reasons :

1. Because that man is such a flatterer of his own reason and knowledge, that he is apt to have a better conceit of himself then Divine rules and principles; he thinks to guide himself well enough without the assistance of Almighty God; and therefore it is that many are so studious to finde out some unheard of thing, and endeavour to make themselves the authors, and inventors of something that may make them seeme wiser then their brethren, and at last to lay aside the rules of God, as if they knew what was fitter and better for them then he: and much, if not all of this is to be found in those innovations, and reformations which have been made upon the worship, and service of

M 3 God;

God; men have itching eares, devising new opinions, and professing extraordinary lights and revelations, such strange stufte as our Fathers never knew, nor we ever heard of before; and being Authors thereof themselves, they highly extol their own conceptions, looking upon well-ordered and religious discipline as no better than popish zeal, and superstitious worship; proceeding even to the questioning of the Truths of God, and the Principles of Christian Religion, whether plainly or covertly laid down in his holy Word.

2. Nothing is more loud than errors, and the more false the matter, the more loud the clamour, getting more voices for its entertainment than truth can find; for every illiterate tongue is ready to cry out, *Great is Diana*, and with the noise of their new erected goodness, quite stop their ears against all religious serving of the true God; yea, we find this project to have been practised of old, where we read of their inhumane zeal in burning their children, and making them passe through the fire to *Moloch*; & that the people might not be incensed against them for their cruelty, nor themselves moved to pitty, they had the noise of Instruments to drown the cryes of their children, that their voice might not be heard. And in allusion to this I may say, that the loud cry of error and heresie may be so great

great in a Nation, that the voice of one man or more that is faithful, and would plead in defence of truth, cannot possibly be heard, but may be over-born by a multitude; because each man will have his vote, and as much, if not more, talk than he; yet know this, that one *Micaiah* speaking from the Oracle of God, is better than many *Balaams* offering sacrifices, and cursed devotions from enchanted Altars; whose great conspiracy is only to work the ruine of Gods people: yea such is the wickedness of ungodly men, that if a *Micaiah* speak the truth, he must presently suffer, and be buffeted on the cheek with a contumelious reproof; saying (as that wicked one did) *Which way went the Spirit of God from me to speak unto thee?* 2 Chron. 18. 23. the truth is, none are more ready to boast of the Spirit of God, than they that have it not.

3. The wickedness of mens lives is such, that Gods glory loses much honour by them, and therefore he is pleased to vindicate himself by bearing witness to the truth by his own Word; *Many*, saith St. Peter, *shall follow their pernicious wayes, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of*, 2. St. Peter 2. 2. not so much neither by the blasphemy of tongues, and Jewish calumnies, as by those that have the confidence to call them-

selves Christians ; the wickedness of whose actions causeth Gods glorious Name to be dishonoured, and those sacred Truths (that ought to be prized and valued above gold and silver, or any earthly treasure) so much as in them lies , is disgraced by their unholy conversations , who prefer lying vanities before them ; the consideration whereof should make those that are Christians indeed to defend truth against the loud noise of errors, and preserve it against the malice of those that study nothing so much as to contradict it ; for this end are we made Christians , for this cause do we receive a second birth, for this end are we made members of the holy Catholick Church, namely, that we shoule defend the Truths of God with our lives and estates : though it must be granted , that truth lyes not within the power of men , or the malice of Devils , that they should harm it ; Truth is not lesse glorious in it self for being contradicted , but only in the worlds estimation ; Truth is of the nature of God, whose Glory is not capable of augmentation or diminution , though God is said to be glorified by his creatures serving of him ; now you must not suppose it to arise from any addition we can make to his Glory, but only a satisfaction he is pleased to take in beholding our obedience to his Will ; for though we be never so wicked, yet

yet we must continually conclude, thou art *holy*, O thou *holy* One of *Israel*, that art the same for ever and changeſt not: and as is God himself, the same is his Truth, whose Excellency lies in this, that it is unchangeable in its being, it is that Verity unto which nothing can be added or subſtracted; for if the one were found, the other would necessarily follow, as we find it by daily experience, that those things that may be extended may also be contracted, and where there is room for addition, there will be also place found for subtraction; but God and his Truth can have nothing added or taken from them; the highest part of our greatness being unable to reach the lowest part of his Glory, and when we have said all that can be expressed, we can say nothing more than this, that he is infinite; for when we magnifie God, we only express him great, but do not thereby make him great; when we blaspheme him, we indeavour our utmost to lessen his Glory, but no harm can we do thereby to him, though very much to our ſelves, by increasing our own misery; and when we praise him, it ſhews our endeavours to make him great, but nothing is added to his Greatness by our exultations: when we oppoſe his Power, it is not he, but our ſelves that receive damage by the ſame; ſo likewife when we witness to the Truth,

it

it is not God, but our selves that are made the better by our fidelity; for the Truth makes us free, when in witnessing we confess with our lips, & profess in our lives that Divine Truth. Thus to give testimony (indeed) to that Truth will save our souls from death eternal, and bring them to the possession of Glory everlasting; for it is Truth that will bring benefit unto us, and not we to the Truth; but the aim of Almighty God, in calling us to be his Servants and Ministers, is, that we should be honoured by witnessing to the Truth, for the Truth of God is not the greater by it, but only appears the more glorious in us; the better we are made by the Truths of God, the more glory we bring to the God of Truth: There are two things, the *apple of a mans eye*, and the *Christian Religion*, which of all things in the world are the most tender, and which may be easily offended; the one with a mote, the other with a scruple; therefore it concernes us, as we are men, to preserve the one, and as we are Christians to beware of the other, lest through our unholy conversations the way of truth come to be evil spoken of. Indeed it is every mans duty to know truly what may, and what must not be done, when persecutions arise; and accordingly there are four things principally considerable and necessary respecting Truth.

1. Light.
2. Dissimulation.
3. Simulation.
4. Denial.

1. Light to discern truth from falsehood.
2. Dissimulation of the truth.
3. Simulation of falsehood: Or,
4. Denial of the Truth.

1. If personal persecutions arise, then light is necessary to direct a man whether it be lawful for him to fly, or to stand still and undergo the cruelty of his adversaries; indeed our Saviour saith, *When one is sought he must fly from one city to another*, St. Matth. 10. 23. but he meanes of a personal persecution, when a man hath no publick charge committed to him, then he may lawfully fly to secure himself; but if otherwise he have a charge under him, as suppose him a Minister of the blessed Word and Sacraments, then he must defend his Flock, for the Church must not be forsaken for the fear of undergoing the wrath of men, lest his flight should betray them to errors and heresie; for when a common persecution of the Sheep and the Shepherd comes both together, it is altogether unlawful for a Shepherd to fly: *A good Shepheard layes down his life for his Sheep*, saith our Saviour, St. John 10. 11. and though a man may use all lawful meanes

means to preserve his life, when a single persecution arises, as by flight, or other wayes; yet it is not so when it comes against both the Shepherd and the Flock; for a Shepherd by dying or suffering for them may preserve his Flock from ruine: I say, then a Shepherd should rather chuse to have his own body mangled alone; or if that will not satisfie their rage, then willingly and cheerfully he must make one with the butcher'd Flock, rather than leave his Sheep in the way of persecuters cruelty. And therefore I wonder not at the just retaliation of Gods Vengeance upon those, who for self-preservation dissemble the truth: and that brings me to the second thing considerable;

2. Dissimulation whether it be of men, or of truth; if understood of men, then it is an hiding or diminution of such a man that is sought for, and inquired after by persecutors, as if he were not in being, or as if such an one never had been; and thus to do is unlawful: so likewise in matter of truth and faith, as it is lawful for a man not to detect himself, but to carry himself as purely from the bloud of all men, so likewise to preserve his own, so far as self-preservation brings no dishonour to God and his Truth; for what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth like a good Disciple of Jesus Christ: though it is true indeed,

deed, sometimes we find in the holy Scriptures, that men have taken the safest way they could to come to Christ, as *Nicodemus* did *when he came by night*, in St. *John* 3. 26. and likewise *Joseph of Arimathea* came secretly to *beg the body of Jesus for fear of the Jews*, St. *John* 19. 38. and though, I say, we find so much done in holy Writ, yet it was through the greatness of their infirmities; for the one being a great man, a Ruler in *Israel*, and the other a Counsellor, they should have been as exemplary as their places, for the better encouragement of others to seek after life, it being the glory of such persons to attract goodness as well as greatness. Indeed I grant, that the best of Saints want not their infirmities, and that the best Christians cannot keep in such a resolution, as may enable them always to be in a readiness to suffer; for we are commanded to be innocently serpentine, and serpentineley innocent; yet thus much I do affirm, that no man can keep himself a true Christian, that is either ashamed or afraid to be thought a Christian; for our Saviour saith, *He that is ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory*, St. *Luke* 9. 26. And though the Apostle saith, *If thou hast faith have it to thy self*, Rom. 14. 22. as if a man might conceal his faith; nothing lessle,

lesse, for he speaketh it not of those things which we are to believe as necessary unto salvation, but of those things which are indifferent in themselves, & may or may not be done, as they please or displease our brethren; such a faith a man is to keep to himself: but a faith that contains those things which are necessary unto salvation he ought not, nor can he, if a real Christian, conceal it in times of persecution or suffering, for in so doing he brings himself to lose his interest in the Promises which are made ours in Christ Jesus, only upon the condition of continuing stedfast in believing unto the end.

3. Simulation, which is a fiction in faith; and another demonstration of a thing then it is in it self; and for a man to counterfeit any thing in, or against, true Religion or the Truths of God, to save himself in time of persecution, is altogether unlawful. Scotus saith, "When a man hath a sign of another thing which he is to do, besides that which is before him, and it proves not a sign, but he knows it to be really the thing it self which he is to do, then, though an ignorance of what the sign intended might have excused him before, because he did not understand the meaning thereof; yet now that he is sure it is the thing it self, the mistaking or leaving out but of one circumstance may make the whole action sinful, there being no excuse

“ excuse to be drawn for the same, either
“ from the goodness of his person now, or the
“ holiness of his former life, that can make
“ good, or fill up what was wanting and de-
“ fective in his actions. Nor is David ex-
cusable in feigning himself mad before the
people, 1 Sam. 21. 13. though he was a
man after Gods own heart: No, much
more is commendable the faying of old
Eleazar, when at the command of Antio-
chus, all were to die that would not eat swines
flesh, and when he had eaten it, or at least
seemed to eat it (for he spit it out again) and
repenting, came of his own accord to the tor-
ment, choosing to die gloriously, rather than
live stained with such an abomination;
therefore saith he excellently, when per-
suaded by friends to bring flesh of his own,
and make as if he obeyed the King in eat-
ing the flesh taken from the Sacrifice; It
becomes not one of my years to dissemble; for
then any young person may think that I, be-
ing fourscore years old and ten, were now gone
to a strange Religion; and so they, through my
hypocrisie, and desire to live a little time, and
a moment longer, should be deceived by me,
and so I get a stain, and make my old age ab-
ominable: and though I should at present
be delivered from men, yet should I not escape
the hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor
dead: 2 Maccab. 6.19, 20, 21. When it
once comes to this strait, that we must
either

either deny the truth, or fall under the sword of persecution, we are rather to die in, or for the Faith, then forsake it : and as we may not, for the saving of our lives, doe that which is unlawfull ; much lesse must we free our goods from danger by similation, or making a lie ; we must not similate good into evil, nor truth into falsehood, by wicked words or works ; nor seeme to doe good when we intend nothing lesse, because of the lye which will lie upon us, and we shall be guilty of, for so doing ; and withall, because there is a lye in deed as well as in saying, and neither is allowable in any man, under what pretence soever, though the doing thereof were to save his life ; *For we must not doe evil that good may come thereof*, Rom. 3.8.

4. Deniall of the truth, and that either by subscribing against it, or by doing that in our lives and actions which is directly opposite unto it; for there is a double denial of truth :

1. In Faith.
2. In practice.

1. In Faith, for the love of pleasures.

2. In Practice, for fear of pain.

1. In Faith ; *Some have made shipwrack of faith and a good conscience*, 1 Tim. 1.19. and the reason is given in 2 Tim. 3.4. why they so did; it was because they were *lovers*

lovers of pleasures more then losers of God. And as they for love of worldly pleasure, cast away truth of Faith: So

2. Others for fear of pain have done it in fact, *having a forme of godliness, but denying the power thereof, &c.* 2 Tim. 3. 5. And in words profess that they know God, but in workes they deny him, Titus 1. 16. being reprobate to every good work, &c. But besides this denying of truth in faith and practice, there is also a deniall of the truth in judgement, and this admits of divers degrees.

1. Apostasie, when men fall from truth into sinfull errors.

2 When they revile the truth by evil speeches: Thus wicked men detect themselves to be enemies to that truth which with their tongues and hands they violently oppose.

3. The sin (also) against the *holy Ghost*, comes in under the notion of a sinfull, Apostate, and reviling judgement; and that appears

1. In matter of Faith.

2. In matter of Fact.

1. In matter of Faith, when men fall off from the truth of Faith; first forsaking of it, then denying, and at last blaspheming the truths of God, and continuing in that blasphemy; this is to sinne against the holy Ghost in matter of Faith.

2. In matter of Fact ; and that is, when men doe those things which are utterly contrary to the revealed will of Almighty God, and obstinately persist in the same : this is to sinne in matter of Fact against the holy Ghost ; for every action that dishonours God, and heartens others to doe the like, is to deny the truths of God ; therefore it concerneſ every man to look to himself, and make a curiouse examination by what hath been ſaid in reference to his words and works, that ſo he may not be found guilty of those errores and crimes which the workes and words of our Saviour eminently convince of ; for we are obliged, though with the losſe of our lives, to bear witness to the truth ; for to this end were we *born, regenerate, made Christians*, came into the world, the *Christian Chruch*, that we both in our *words*, in our *workes*, in our *lives*, by our *deaths*, if called thereunto, ſhould bear witness to the truth. And ſo I have done with the act, *Bear witness.*

To this end was I borne, and for this cause came I into the world, that I ſhould bear witness to the truth.



Testis fidelis :

OR,

The faithful Witness.

SERMON VIII.

St. JOHN 18. 37.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

THe lives of most men are mispent; it being onely they who have a certain end of their actions, that shall attain to the right end for which those actions are designed, namely, the glory of God, and their own

N 2 salva-

salvation ; some there are that shoot at they know not what mark, they direct themselves to an universal scope, not minding, or regarding the particular tendency of their doings ; hence it is that they arise not to perfection, they continue in that evil which ends in discomfort ; some level at the right end, but level amiss, wanting prudence and discretion rightly to manage their actions, so as may best direct to the true end of their creation : It is only true Christian wisdome that shewes the right end, and certainly finds out the way thereunto ; and a wise Christian, amidst the many changes of this life, continually presses to one end, with reverence and respect, still setting his resolution in all his wayes, if possible, to get near to the great centre ; who when he was summoned unto death, and betrayed thereunto by his seeming friend, yet stedfastly asserted the end of his life, saying, *To this end was I borne, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.*

In which words I have already observed these particulars :

1. An Action.

2. An End.

3. The Object.

1. The Action, *he was born, he came into the world.*

2. The

2. The End, and that } Pointed at,
 &
 Pointed out.
1. Pointed at, *to this end, and
for this cause.*
2. Pointed out, *to bear wit-
ness.*
3. The Object, *the truth: To this
end was I borne, and for this cause
came I into the world, &c.*

I have traversed over all the parts of my Text, in the primary intention thereof, as it concerned our Saviour, and have entered upon the two last parts, as they concern us, in the extension thereof, and have insisted upon the former of the latter parts; namely, *To bear witness.*

I shall now come to the third and last thing.

The Object, *The truth.*

*To this end was I borne, and for this
cause came I into the world, that I
should bear witness to the truth.*

Truth is the first thing in intention, though last in enjoyment, as being the end of all; and he that would be happy in the end, must lay hold of truth in the beginning: it was a question too good for a *Pilate* to ask, *What is truth?* St. John 18.38. because his jesting speech shewed he never intended a sober inquiry after it: and be-

sides, the Schooles have wearied themselves in their Questions raised about the power, and Infiniteness of God, as distinguished into parts, how all could be in one, and yet that one in all; so as that it is distinguished into past present and future, and so he hath a time of giving and receiving, Thus the body of the Sunne containes all light essentially in it self, and when communicated to the Moon and Stars, it is still the same, though multiplyed. So is truth, according to the divers acceptations of it; for as it is considered in it self, so it is one intire being; but as embraced by severall apprehensions, it is divided, though in it self still the same; and this truth is that light which is really *one in all*; yet so, as this one light gives information to severall capacities: For

1. There is essentially, a cause of light in, the understanding; and this the *Schooles* call the *first light*; and this you may understand, to be as the light in the Sunne, when intire in it self, and uncommunicated to the lesser and inferiour Globes.

2. There is a formal light, and that consists in the exercising the dictates, and right informations of the understanding; and therefore Saint *Austin* rightly defines truth when exercised, to be the creature of an enlightened understanding; and this created truth

truth is called, *a life exemplary from the increased truths of God*: and this is as the light of the sunne-beames to the moon and stars, &c. or the diffusions of truth, from the understanding received into all the parts and faculties of the Soul, together with the affections which are as the lesser stars: but besides this, there is also a secondary light, conformable to the thing exprest; and this, whether it be in the minde, or in words conceived, or uttered, it must first suppose a forme of knowledge, received by the apprehension of a man, according to the will of God; and these two do but differ as the understanding, to the thing conceived; which in it self is so necessary, that without it no Salvation can be received.

But then this truth, as it may diversly be distinguished, is not to be the object of our Faith, so as that without the knowledge thereof we cannot be happy; for there are truths naturall, and truths theologicall; but those truths which we are called out principally to witness unto in speaking and doing, by words and workes, are theologicall; and that is, those truths that are declared in the principles of divine Scriptures; and they are the Scriptures of truth, the law of truth, the word of truth, that necessarily call for our testimony, together with all those doctrines

of Faith and manners therein exprest, as they are reduced from errors; for every divine truth laid down in Scripture, or drawn from Scripture, is that the subject we are to bear witness unto; and this is the truth, that containes in it the doctrine of Faith and manners, the one in words, the other in workes; so as that we, in testimony of words and workes, should bear witness to the truth.

1. We must bear witness to the doctrines of Faith, by the testimony of our words; as *with the heart man believeth to righteousness, so with the tongue confession is made unto Salvation.* Rom. 10.10. What we believeth in our hearts, we must confess with our lips, and in Saint John 1.20. St. John Baptist confessing himself not to be Christ, it is clear, he denied not the truth, but onely that he was not the Christ; but he that confesses not the truth openly, denies Christ in that place where God hath set him, whether he be considered as a private man, or a Minister; as a Minister, he denies Christ in words, who is guilty of abusing the Scriptures by false glosses, for the countenancing of rebellion or error, either against God or man.

He denies Christ as a private man that omits to do what God wills, as well as by doing

doing of that which he nills ; you finde this in the song of *Deborah*, though they denied not to go out to battail , yet because they stood still, and appeared not for Israel, it is said (by the Angel of the Lord) *Curse ye Meroz, curse them bitterly , because they came not to the help of the Lord to the help of the Lord against the mighty*, Jud. 5. 23. and wherever there is truth of faith in the heart, there wil be confession of God in the mouth: for confession is an act of faith, *I believed, therefore have I spoken*, &c. he forsakes the truth, that doth not profess it in words and works ; therefore let not any man think, that onely silence, where the truths of God are to be manifested, will argue his consent; for they that will bear witness , must confess the truth indeed : there is a confession which is onely by constraint, even the Hereticks and hypocrites do so , they will confess truth, but they do it with equivocation ; for if it be from their minds , it is extorted, or if otherwaies they do it, it is from conviction of conscience ; so we find the Egyptian sorcerers confessed, *it was the finger of God*, when they saw no likelyhood of longer deceiving the people; for we find by experience, that those that will not voluntarily and freely, shall be driven by constraint to confess the truth: thus *Balaam* shall bless those people for nothing, he was formerly hired to curse. But though some

speake

speake well of goodness against their wills, and by constraint, yet a voluntary acknowledging of the truth best becomes a Christian; therefore saith Saint Peter, *sanctifie the Lord in your hearts, and be ready alwayes to give an answer to any man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear,* 1 Saint Peter 3. 15.

But further, it is not enough to witness a good confession, though before a *Pilate*, when brought thereunto as a *Malefactor*, but also as a free Christian, thou art bound to profess the truth openly, not onely against persecutors, and *Schismaticks*, but also against *Hereticks*, and all others what-ever, that say, or do any thing that we know is contrary, or against the truth; when we see men bring in damnable heresies, *even denying the Lord that bought them*, as Saint Peter saith 2 Pe. 2.1. then take heed lest our silence at those be found to give occasion to men of corrupt minds to say, *loe here is Christ and there is Christ*, as some have blasphemously done, and I know you are not ignorant (of that which I tremble to speak) that there are those that call themselves *God*, the *Lamb of God*, and the *Virgin Mary*, &c. But I fear they are no better then *Magdalen* but before her conversion; and whence hath this proceeded but from the unholy conversations of men, silently suffering the glorious name

of

of Almighty God to be blasphemed ? and now that this wickedness is already come to so great a fulness, shall I hold my peace ? no, rather shall my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, then with silence I suffer such blasphemy to go unreproved ; the watchman ought alwaies to be in readiness to give the alarum when he sees the enemy approach , lest his silence incurre the guilt of the peoples blood , if shed through his default : and that minister that holds his peace, when errors and heresies begin to destroy the Church, and servants of God, doth by that his silence give consent to their destruction ; and *their blood*, if they dy in their sins , *will God require at his hands*, *Ezek. 33. 8.* and wo unto that man that suffers his flock to be scattered by his neglect , *and so they become meat to all the beasts of the field* , *Ezek. 34. 5.* for when once the flock is scattered they must needs be devoured by the wild beasts of the Forrest ; and our *Saviour* tells us plainly , that the *Talent* which is not improved in *Gods service*, *shall be taken away from him, and given unto those who have better deserved it*, *Saint Matt. 25. 28.* noting thereby unto us, that we are to improve all the gifts and graces that are in us, for the best advantage both of our own , and other souls welfare , lest God charge the loss of any soul upon our account ; for certainly if any perish through

through our default, the blood of that man shall be required at our hands ; *and woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel*, saith Saint Paul, *1 Cor. 9. 16.* that is, surely (above all others) my condition will be extremely sad, if through my neglect of faithful declaring the mind of God, any poor soul miscarry : and as it was the condition of that great Apostle, so is it of every minister of the Gospel, for we kill those souls, we see going to destruction through ignorance, or otherwaies, and do not admonish them: therefore it is that St. Paul saith, *he kept nothing from the people of God that was for their good*, which makes him truly to boast that he was *pure from the blood of all men*, *Acts the 20.26.* and he himself gives a reason of his pureness, *because he had declared unto them the whole counsel of God*. *v. 17.* therefore it concerns all the *Ministers* of the *Gospel* that are faithful to deliver their message truly, not withholding from the people any thing of the whole counsel of God : for the unwarned sinner shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will be required at the *watchmans* hands ; therefore saith the Lord, *Ezek. 33. 8.* *If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his evil way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hands* : and for us to be guilty of silence, when any of our brethren go astray, is no other then bringing their

their iniquities upon our heads, who are set to watch over their souls; and seeing it is so necessary a duty to warn people of their sins, to this end do I come to wait upon you, that I should bear witness to the truth, by telling you of those evils that will certainly follow upon unholy walking, and sinful apprehensions, either of God or his truth, and Ordinances; *for to this end came every man into the world* (but Ministers especially) that in words they might bear witness to the truth; and not only in words, but

2. In works also, we must witness to the doctrines of faith by doing, for the testimony of the life in action, and the hand in communicating, is far more effectuall then the mouth can express; and not onely must we by holy actions do that which may convince and strengthen them that are with us, but also by communicating the truth in writing to those that are absent from us; for the pen conveyeth to many, the tongue but to a few: and therefore the Church of God hath in all ages made provision accordingly; to this end were those six general Councils held, at *Nice, Trent, &c.* besides, we find the enemies of the truth are busie, and careful to instruct their followers, by all wayes and means that may make them able to defend error and heresie: and therefore it would be a

shame

shame to Christianity, that our zeal should not be as great to defend the truth, as the malice of wicked ones is to destroy it. O let it never be said of us, that we are so careless of mens souls, that we never endeavoured to arm them against the errors that rise up in opposition to the truth, but suffer the adversaries thereof to get advantage against them, and so by our negligence and remissness, the undervaluers of truth come to prevail. O let it never be spoken, (to our reproch) that they that make it their business to speak evil of God and Godliness, are more industrious to promote error and heresie, then we are to manifest the word of truth in sincerity: rather let us lift up our voices like trumpets (and tell *Iudah of her sins, and Israel of their transgressions*) then suffer our selves to be meal-mouth'd, and afraid to speak against error and heresie, though we should meet with it in robes and gorgeous apparel; for an unfaithful minister is like an unjust judge; which cannot but condemne himself, while he passeth sentence upon others. But then,

3. If our active testimony by words and works be not received, then our passive testimony, in suffering for the Tryth, must not be denied; for it is a Christians duty, both to do (and if God call for it) to die for

for the truth; yea, though the world should condemn us of folly for becoming Martyrs to rescue Truth from the snare of the wicked, and our cheerful contests for the same be laid upon us by wicked and unregenerate men, as a mark of contradiction; yet let us not be discouraged therewith, as knowing, that thereby we do but fill up the sufferings of our blessed Redeemer, who will have us to contend earnestly for the faith, though it be sometimes not without losse of goods, estate, yea and suffering of pain, imprisonment, losse of bloud, and that in great abundance, but also by death it self. For it is a Tyrants way, to torture Christians by cruel usage, and at last destroy them: yea such hath been the lot of Gods Saints in all ages, thus to be persecuted and destroyed; for the Prophet *Elijahs* must be in danger, the *Jeremies* in prison, the Disciples lose their goods, and the holy Confessors pay their tribute of allegiance to Almighty God with pain, and the Martyrs with their lives; and though these afflictions may seem terrible to Christians to suffer for the Truth, yet the highest of them is no more than lawful, and necessary if called thereunto; for the pious hearts of true Christians have alwayes thus testified to the Truth, witness Saint *Paul*, *What mean you to weep and break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but*

to die at Ierusalem , for the Name of the Lord Iesus , Acts 21. 13. and Acts 20.24. He saith elsewhere, *Neither do I account my life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my course with joy.* It is remarkable to consider the way which Almighty God took to support his Disciples and Servants, in despight of the wisdom and malice of the *Jews*, for the planting of his Church in Christianity , that it will appear almost incredible to hear what were the afflictions of the Church, how intolerable her sufferings, that had they not had one to support them who was Almighty and All-sufficient , it had been impossible they should have continued stedfast ; but they had not only the inward support of the Spirit to strengthen , but the outward example of our Saviours Passion to incourage them unto a conformity to him , both in doing and suffering ; and so nearly did the Saints copy out one anothers lives, that their spirits were seemingly converted into one anothers bodies , and one would have thought that the dying bloud of the one was infused into anothers veins ; for no sooner was one cut off by the hands of cruelty , but God presently inspired another with faith and patience to witness to his Truth, and the torturing of the body made but the mouth speak the louder in witnessing unto the Truth. So that by what you

you have already heard you may see Christian Profession is no secure kind of living; for he that believes in Christ, must be no niggard of his life for the Truth, when God calls to bring him home by death. Indeed it is yet our happiness, that in these cloudy dayes we are not brought to the fire and faggot for the tryal of our faith; God only knows when, and upon whom that heavy lot must fall, and in what manner it will come; this we are not able to demonstrate, but by the luke-warmness of most mens zeal in the truth of Religion; it is to be feared, that when those dayes do come, that many will turn from Christ rather than burn for the Truth, because it appears, that many untrained souls are so wedded to their lusts, that they had rather lose their interest in Gods love, then forgoe one darling sin: many do so love the works of vanity, that they have made shipwrack of faith; and turned their eares unto fables; and when you shall read, or hear of these, then may you imagine those locusts are come upon the earth, spoken of by St. John in the 9th of the *Revelation* 8, 9. verses, which had power to torture men, and like Scorpions with their power able to sting them to death; then beware, lest you be led into the errors of the wicked, 2 St. Pet. 3. 17. but be you stablished in the known, ac-

knowledged and established Church of *England*; which I dare be bold to say, for *doctrine* and *discipline* is more *purely true*, and *truly pure* from *errors*, than any *Christian Church* or *Congregation* whatsoever; and shall be ready to prove them so, when occasion shall call me thereunto; for the Truth of God will remain pure, notwithstanding the malice of gain-sayers, and therefore we should defend it with all our might, for the Truth will spread it self, though there be no other place but Pulpits to declare it in, nor no other witnessing but by preaching, nor no witnesses but Prophets; but yet many in their lowest condition have yet highly exalted God, by a faithful testimony to his Truth; and though this life be encombed by sickness and infirmities, yet this readiness to suffer shall be able to silence any gain-sayer: when thou art not able to witness much, because of thy weakness, yet do as much as thou canst, do your best, and God will accept it, though mean, if from a willing mind; for it will be nothing to suffer by martyrdome, when we consider it is for so great a prize, as is the Truth of God, and two be to our souls, if we continue stedfast herein: for still, in every age, God will keep some defenders of the Truth; and why may not we be the persons? therefore should God call us to it, and we refuse

fuse to suffer for the Truth, it would be but a just judgement for God to take his Gospel from us, and give it to a more faithful people; for so the Apostles were commanded to serve the *Jews*, *Acts 13. 46.* the Truth of God, in the House of God, had dwelt among us for many years together, in much serenity, till of late years it hath been tossed upon the troubled waters; therefore let us in our words and works witness to it, lest he take it from us also, and give it to others that will give it better entertainment than we have done. Therefore let all of us make it our prayer unto Almighty God:

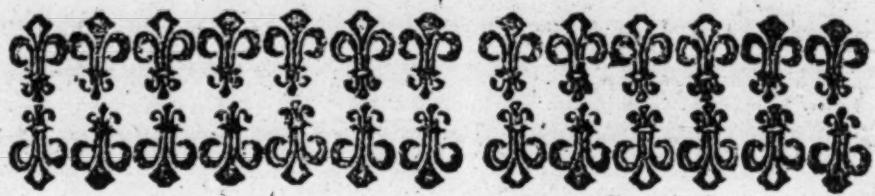
Oh Lord, rather let our hearts witness to the Truth, that thy Truth may witness unto us; then by our not witnessing for thee we come to be destroyed by thee: let thy Truth dwell with us here, that we may dwell with thee hereafter.

Brethren, let not your faith be shaken or moved by tribulations, or any kind of sufferings whatsoever, knowing this, that after you have fought a good fight, and kept the faith, there shall be laid up for you (and all other his faithful Servants) a Crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall give you at that day, 2 Tim. 3. 7, 8. and to this end were we born, and for this

Testis fidelis : Or,

cause we all came to the Christian world, the Church of God, that we, in our estates and callings, lives and deaths, should bear witness to the truth.

Testis



Testis fidelis :

OR,

The faithful Witness.

SERMON IX.

St. JOHN 18. 37.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

THe pattern of all Presidents, and the life of all that is good in man, is the God in man, the man in God, the man Christ Jesus, who in his birth was a pattern of humility, in his life of innocence, in his death of patience, in all a

pattern of holiness : as it is the marrow of Religion, to worship God in spirit and Truth, and to serve him with truth in the inward man ; so the iniquity of a Christian consists in not doing what he did, or not doing what he commands; for as he *did endure the contradiction of sinners*, in witnessing to the Truth, so should Christians ; and though they meet with unreasonable dealings from men, yet they should undergo all with patience, for since Christ was a pattern of goodness, we must so look to *Iesus* in our lives, that we should bear witness to the Truth ; for *to this end were we, as well as he, born, and for this cause came we into the world, &c.*

In which words I have already observed these three things:

1. An Action.

2. An End.

3. An Object.

1. The Action, *He was born, he came into the world.*

Pointed at.

2. The End { and

Pointed out.

Pointed at, *for this cause, and to this end.*

Pointed out, *to bear witness.*

3. The Object, *The Truth.*

I have discoursed over all the parts of the Text as they concerned our Saviour ;

and

and came to the two last parts, as they generally concern us, and dispatcht the *act*, & the *end* of Christ's coming into the world, & shal now go on with the last part of the Text,

The object, *the truth*.

And shall shew

1. What it is, so as that it is distinguished into past, present, and future: truth is as the sun, which hath an *intrinsecal* light in it self; and as in the sun, so there is an essence of light in the understanding, and this is as the light of the sun uncommunicated. But

2. There is an *extrinsecal* light communicated to other things, which in their beings are no other then *uncreated* truths of things, and these are divided from the *created* truths of God, and are as the light of the sun to the moon and stars; and then there is a proposition following the thing exprest, which is no other in being, but the thing it self, and is demonstrated in the truth, by a double application to the thing exprest, and which is conceived in the mind by word, and in the understanding by knowledge; and this is as the light of the sun communicating it self to this region of the lower aire, and this hath multiplicity of acts, derived from the matter conceived; and accordingly we must distinguish truth into these four parts: there is *a divine, historical, moral, and civil truth*

though especially the divine truth is that which is to be witnessed unto ; though the other in a subordinate manner are to have their attestation also , yet divine truths most of all, whether we consider them as Principal, or Less principal.

1. Principal, and they are the Scriptures of truth, the law of truth, and the word of truth.

2. The less principal , are the necessary conclusions, which upon inferences are deduced from those grounds; therefore every parcel of truth, whether it be Scripture, or deduced from Scripture, is to be the subject matter of a Christians testimony, and these are they which we are to witness unto, and comprehend the truth of faith and manners ; which is to be witnessed unto both in words and works : I have spoken of the doctrine of faith formerly, and shewed that we are to witness to it by doing and suffering, and if God call us thereunto, by dying also: I shall now come to the

Second branch, which contains these divine moral truths, that are for the regulation of our lives laid down in the Scriptures of the old and new Testament ; there Gods law is the truth , and the truth of the Gospel is that law whose precepts and promises we are to imitate. It was a custome among the heathens , to derive their

lawes

lawes from their Gods, giving them names accordingly: but we that are Christians have our law from the true God, who is the author of truth; *The law was given by Moses, but Grace and truth came by Iesus Christ, Saint John 1. 17.* where you see the truth of salvation is ascribed to the Gospel; and that which we are to consider, the end of Christ's coming into the world for, is, that it was not to give new lawes, but to fulfil the old law: for we find not the forme of the new Testament to carry in it the authority of a law, but onely the precepts thereof to be brought in occasionally by our *Saviour, in a way of interpretation, exhortation, and also by application, but not in a way of constitution: therefore saith our Saviour, think not that I came to destroy the law and the Prophets, &c. Saint Matt. 5. 17. 18.* It is not that I come to take away the law and the Prophets, but rather to fulfil them; this is that law which is the rule of mens actions, written

First by *Moses, and*
Then by the Prophets.

It is to be understood of all the law, as it was given unto the Jews, and others, whether they were men just or unjust; but especially unto the Jewes, in a more ample translation then to other people: the law of works, it is true, was abolished by our Saviours comming; but the law of doctrines,

and

and rules of holy living, given by Almighty God in the Mount ; though these were in some sense perfected by bringing in the substance, (for the shadowes fie away when the substance appears,) yet I say, this law is not disanulled, but perfected in such a manner, that it is now become the perfect rule of Christian piety, whatever the *Antinomians* say in opposition thereunto ; as that it was nayled to the Cross of Christ, and so abolished by his death ; but it is evident to the contrary, that still the whole commanding power remains, because the whole world shall be judged by the law, and word of truth, *for every man shall be judged according to his works* ; Rev. 2.23. and we are to bear witness to this truth, by the testimony of our hands and tongues, our words and works : of our tongues, and that two wayes ;

Both by speaking the truth to the *religious*, and also by defending of it against the *erroneous*.

1. By speaking of the truth to the *religious*, though they know it already, yet that they may be established in the truth, and therefore holy *David* makes it his prayer to get direction from God, how to be enabled to walk in the truth of God, under divers denominations ; *Psalm 119.* sometimes he prayes to be directed in the law of God, verse 18. sometimes in the

statutes

statues of God, ver. 26. sometimes in the Judgements of God, v. 7. sometimes in the truth of God, ver. 43, sometimes in the word of God, ver. 17. and sometimes in the Ordinances of God, v. 91. thereby giving us to understand that in the most confirmed Saints there is still so much of corruption, that if left to themselves, they will be in danger of relapsing; and therefore saith St. Paul to his *Ephesians*, who were great Christians, *Let no man deceive you with vain words, &c. Ephes. 5. 6.* intimating, that there was a possibility for them to be led away with the *error of the wicked*, for what Saint Peter long since foretold, is in our dayes found too true, as *there were false teachers among them, so there should be amongst us that shall deceive many, &c. 2 St. Peter 2. 12.* though indeed he tells us, that they were the unlearned and the *unstable* that *wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction, ch. 16.* yet he admonisheth the faithful that they should not be led away by the *errors of the wicked, 2 St. Peter 3. 17, 18.* and St. Paul saith, if *he, or an Angel from heaven, should come and offer any other doctrine let him be accursed, Gal. 1. 8.* which implies that there would some come which would offer another doctrine, and that to the eminent Christians of *Galatia*; and if it were possible *the very elect should be deceived, so saith our Saviour, Saint*

Mat.

Matth. 24. 24. therefore I say in a matter of so high concernment as divine truth is, we cannot do better then to confirme and bear witness to the truth , as by speaking of it to the religious, so

Secondly, by speaking of it against the erroneous, passing the sentence of condemnation upon them that contradict the Scriptures, that by it we may confirme the truth to the faithful, by confutation of the opposite errors with the holy Scripture, which is the word of truth ; and as it is the will of God , so the rule of righteousness, and they that will rove from this rule of truth are erroneous , whether it be in understanding, or conversation : for those teachers that are already gone astray , and by breaking Gods commandments, teach others so to do, are chiefly erroneous, however they may think to pacifie the world, onely with a bare pretence to the truth , and call the wisdome that is above, their father, thereby intending to deceive the simple with a shew of relation unto Almighty God, while indeed they are the servants of the Devil; for they know that if error should come in its proper shape, it would be loathsome to every eye , but now that it comes in the name, and semblance of truth , they think none will refuse it, for many, saith our Saviour, shall come in my name, saying , I am Christ, and shall deceive many, Saint Mat.

24. 5. so that you see truth is wounded by her own bow: and as *Jacob* got the blessing in the hairy garment of *Esau* his *elder brother*, thereby deceiving his *Father*; so the wicked and erroneous men that are in the world, seek to deceive the *Church* and servants of God, in the apparel of our elder brother *Christ Jesus*; so the *Devil*, that father of lies, could come and tempt our *Saviour* with the words of holy Scripture, for when *Christ* alledged Scripture against him, he did the same to our blessed *Redeemer*; St. Mat. 4. 6. no cunninger way for Apostates to bring in others under the same condemnation with themselves, then by pretending truth and piety to be the ground of their actions. The Prince of darkness will not think scorne to borrow the shape of an Angel of light, if he thinks it may prove to his advantage; and is it not a countenancing of blasphemy for any nation or people to give dispensation for all manner of heretical opinions, who are ready upon all occasions to betray the truth, and the professors thereof into a state of sin and misery? Examine but *Acts* 18. 19. and *1 Kin.* 22. 20. therefore seeing the factors of Satan are ready to betray many souls to perdition, by corrupting Gods holy word, is it not time for us to snatch the sword out of their hands, and beat them with the strength and edge of those spiritual weapons

pons, which they endeavour to wound our heads withal: for the truth is not like wax, which is made to receive the image of every phanatical brain; no, where doubts arise in the holy Scripture, they must be answered by its own spirit, and not another. But as we must defend truth with our tongues, so

Secondly, practically, by our words and works; when the doctrine of Christianity is that way of truth which is evil spoken of, and when men in profession are Christians, but in conversation are Pagans, and Papists, &c. *Ro. 2.24.* and *St. Iam. 2.7.* and when that truth is disgrac'd by the bad lives of men, their sins become ours if we rebuke them not; therefore Saint Paul saith, *have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them,* *Ephes. 5.11.* That tongue which rebukes not his brother when he sees him go astray, draws all the guilt of the action upon himself, and so we make our selves sharers with him in misery; for it is most certain, he gives consent that holds his peace, and no way contradicts the action, *Num. 30. 4.* the father by his silence at the daughters vow is there made co-partner with her; and not onely the father, but the husband also, or any other person by their silence are said to give consent to the action, as appears at large in that chapter. Indeed there are two waies to keep a man from evil:

The

The one by reproof.

The other by not consenting to the action when committed.

For the truth is, any Christians connivance, or evil example, (but Masters and Rulers especially) do harden the sinners heart, and make him think well or ill of himself, according as they approve or condemn the actions they see committed by him; the truth is, the Ministers silence at the sins which he sees committed, often encourageth his people to go to hell; therefore it is St. Pauls complaint, *The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, Rom. 2.24.* and God himself hath commanded expressly, *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, Levit. 19.17.* not to rebuke thy brother when he does amisse, is as much as to hate thy brother; therefore it is said, cry aloud and spare not, tell *Judah of her sins, and Israel of their transgressions;* if we please men we cannot speak the truth, and we must speak the truth, what man soever we displease. Indeed there are three things especially, which breed enmity in men against us for speaking the truth unto them:

1. Displeasure.
2. Disprofit.
3. Discredit.

1. Displeasure; for hearing of the truth onely spoken many times galls some

some : for let but truth be rightly spoken, or seeme in the application but to touch their iniquities, and they will presently, like the frantick patient, flie in the Chirurgeons face when he searches deep, though it be for their safety ; so sometimes the least touch of truth will make men fret and fume, and vent their malice in furious words against them who do but discharge their duty, by a faithfull reproof of their sinfull actions.

2. If it be against their profit, or against their trade, when application of truth is so made, they cannot endure such doctrine, but presently the Minister must suffer an ejection at least for his faithfulness , and this must be done too, with the greatest pretence of Piety ; for they think it no sacrilege to take the houses of God, and make them dens of Theeves ; so that you may see , and cannot but finde, that many times the witnessing of the truth against that where the gain of wicked men lies, breeds in them enmity, both against the truth, and the revealers thereof.

3. Discredit ; rebuke the persons that commit such deeds as are offensive to Almighty God, and presently they conclude their reputation is vanished ; for they think truth no sooner beholds , then accuses their actions ; and, which they account

account worst of all, it condemnes them, and their courses; for truth hath the nature of light, it will discover all the darknesse of our works, and therefore doe men hate the light of truth, *because their deeds are evil*; for truth, in the whole tenor of it, cannot be otherwise then a revealer of evil; for though no man can hate the truth, as pleading for it self in the generall; yet men doe envy it, when particularly it shines upon them, and lets them see themselves; and because men would have a full swadge in their courses, therefore doe they take offence at the truths of God, when manifest to their faces: but however it should not discourage any, whether Minister, or other, from the discharge of their duty, (if we doe it in the discharge of a good conscience) because the world frownes upon us for so doing; knowing this for a truth, that while we bear the ill will of men in witnessing for the truth, yet we gain the good will of God. What though flesh and blood shall say, favour thy self, and comply with wicked men for thy safety? and bid thee change thy voice, as often as the men of the world their principles, and advise thee that this, or that thing is true, because the great ones will have it so? doe not thou incline to any such persuasions, for *Solo-*

mon saith, Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, then a stalled Ox, and hatred therewith, Prov. 15. 17. Which shewes that the enjoyment of Gods love, in the depth of misery, is more to be priced, then the greatest plenty, and the anger of God therewith. But flesh and blood will perswade to the contrary, as if truth had place, but not at all times: but our Saviour shewes it is farre otherwise; for now being before *Pilate*, he carries the same face he had when he was in the Temple: Innocency is as meekly bold, and faithfully confident, when pleading at the barre, as preaching in the Pulpit; nor is it lesse ashamed of truth, because pleading before men, whose intentions are to condemn, not to applaud it for the same; our nakednesse and inability to secure us from their malice and cruelty, shoule not at all frighten us from our duty, in witnessing to the truth, but rather incourage our whole man to be employed in so acceptable a service; for we shoule bear witness to the truth in our understanding, opinion, practice, and in our good workes; for the testimony of the tongue, without the hand, is not sufficient, profession of good workes is the whole work of a Christian; and walking contrary to the truth, is a deniall, or casting a foul aspersion on the truth:

truth: we should bear witnesse to the truth both in words and workes; and it is certainly a great offence to be guilty of either, but most offence when found tardy in both; yet of the two, it is the farre greater sinne to deny God in workes, then in words; and that will appear, if you consider these following reasons.

1. From the Object, the greater it is that we sinne against, the greater is the sinne we commit; now to deny the truth, is to sinne against God himselfe, because he is the Author of truth; therefore to work wickednesse against God, must needs be most criminall, the sinnes against the first Table being those which especially concern him; for which cause Divines conclude him the greater sinner that is found guilty of the first, then he that offends against the second Table onely; because that by the one, he is but guilty of impiety against men, but in the other of wickednesse against God; the one being of defect, the other of excesse: so that the Object, which is offended in the first Table, being the greater, must needs make the sinne to be the more grievous.

2. From the greater evidence; he that denies the truth with his lips, as Saint Peter did, he evidently injures God and Christ; but he that by a wicked life denies the truth, and the God of truth, not

onely injures their natures himself, but incourageth others also to doe the same, by giving them an example of wickedness: the difference, as to men, is onely this; the one seemes openly to deny him in words, the other with his works; the one speaks, and the other doth, evil against him.

3. The sinne is greater in regard of punishment inflicted; for a farre greater punishment is imposed upon the swearer and blasphemer, under the Law, then upon him that offended man onely; the denyall of God in the old Law, was to suffer no other punishment then stoning to death; and the civill Law amongst us doth command, that offenders in this kinde should have their tongues cut out, or bored thorow; which, it seemes, was thought too gentle a punishment among the people of the *Jewes*: And if evil tongues deserve this heavy doom, what think you, is the just desert of wicked hands, and evil works? so that still it remaines a truth, that he that denies God and his truth by a wicked life, is a farre greater sinner then he that doth it onely with his lips: which will more fully appear, if you consider but these four grounds of sinne in their severall causes and degrees:

1. Consider the moving cause.
2. The voluntariness.
3. The perfection.
4. The full signification of sin.

1. From the moving cause of sinne; the more forcible it is, the more grievous it will be to us after the commission thereof; for the seeming pleasures which move men to wicked lives, end in no other then reall disquiet; and let the moving cause of open denying the truth be what it will, yet this is certain, the lesse forcible it is from any extrinsecal cause, the more guilt we contract by doing of it: as for example, the fear of death may sometimes make a man to deny the truth with his lips, which in many respects will receive a more favourable construction, then if with violence we should turn from professors in shew, to reall persecutors of the truth.

2. From the voluntariness thereof; where there is no consent of the Will the sin is little, but where there is full consent of the will, there is very much of sin, and sin is therefore sin, because voluntary; therefore he who denies the Truth only with his lips for fear of death, doth sin lesse than he who with a wicked life sins with a full liberty of the will, by a free consent, and unconstrained there-

unto by either tyranny or self-interest.

3. From the perfection of all the parts of a man; united in full strength to resist and persecute the Truth; which very much differs from compulsion, because in the one there is a full consent of perfect parts, and in the other there is but a lame consent yeilded by constraint; for he that by a Tyrant is compelled with force of punishment to deny the Truth, doth in a sort deny and not deny, he denies it outwardly with his lips, but his heart grieves inwardly for the same, because his conscience bears witness to the Truth; but he that with a wicked life is given wholly to sin, that he hath all his delights in it, that man hath made himself perfect in evil.

4. From the more full signification, we do signify more of wickedness to be in us by our works than by our words; he sits at a farre greater denial of truth, that denies it by a wicked life, than he that denies it onely with his lips for fear of death; though both these are great aggravations, since in our lives, words, and works we are to bear witness to the Truth; for *to this end were we born, and for this cause came we into the world, &c.*

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Application.

Our Saviour bids, *Let your light so shine before men, &c.* Saint Matthew 5. 6. then we may hence learn, that those that should light others to Heaven by their Doctrine, must not darken their way by the evil example of an unholy life; and not only must Ministers, but people also, let the light of holiness appear visible in their lives: When God places a man (a private Christian) in the lower Orbe, he puts him there to shine like a starre, bright and clear in his own sphere; Christians should shine and bear witness in their lives, and be cautious how they walk, because every sin puts a dimness upon the soul, and darkness internal can expect no other but to go to darkness eternal; and therefore St. Peter saith, *that our good works should make those that look on us as evil doers glorifie God in the day of visitation,* 1 Saint Peter 2. 12. There be some that must believe in Christ throughout the world, and witness his Truth to unbelievers by a holy life; and why may it not belong to us? but if on the contrary we be found to live as they live, how shall they be brought to believe as we believe? It was ~~the~~ saying of a Heathen, *If I did see the Christians lives better, I should think*

their faith better than mine. Religion and the Doctrines of Faith are often disgrac'd by wicked Professors, *1 Tim. 1. 6, 7.* the rebellion of a Christian that is a Servant, though to an Heathen Master, brings a scandal both upon God and on holy Religion: Sure I am, God and Religion is very much disgrac'd, and the Gospel dishonoured, and the Church of Christ abused, by the wicked lives of those that are called the Sons of the Church.

Oh therefore, that by holy lives, judicious reading, faithful hearing, and constant studying and meditating in the wayes of God, and the Truths of God, we would make our selves able and ready to give an account of the hope that is in us; that so both in our knowledge and practice, we bearing witness to the Truth here on earth, we may have the truth in our consciences, to bear witness to our selves, that we are the Sons of God; that so he that ascended into Heaven to take possession of his own Glory, may in time bring us thither, who himself affirmed, and after whose example we should walk, that as he was born, and came into the world to bear witness to the truth, so we should also account of our selves, that we were born, and that we came into the world, that we might bear witness to the truth: that we came into the world, this Christian world, to witness to the truth

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as common Christians ; that we came into the world, the Church of God, as members thereof, to justifie that faith by a holy life, unto which our parents had baptized us ; still indeavouring to carry the same mind in us that was in Christ Jesus, that as he did, so *we came into the world to bear witness to the truth* ; for he justified himself before the judgement-seat of Pilate, saying in the words of my Text, *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.*

The end of the Sermons.



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